LETTERS

OF

ALFRED,

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER,

AND

FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY,

UPON THE IMPORTANT SUBJECT

OF THE

SLAVE TRADE IN GENERAL;

BUT, REFERRING PARTICULARLY TO HIS SPEECH,

AS PRINTED, OF THE 2D OF APRIL, 1792.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE OBSERVER-OFFICE, NO. 17, HOLLYWELL-STREET, STRAND.

M,DCC,XCIII.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

THE FOLLOWING LETTERS,

UPON THE

ABOLITION of the SLAVE COMMERCE,

ARE,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE JUSTICE AND ABILITY

WHICH

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

HAS ALREADY MANIFESTED UPON THAT IMPORTANT QUESTION,

Most Respectfully Inscribed,

By his Obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

A P P E A L

To the MERCHANTS and MANUFACTURERS

OF GREAT BRITAIN,

PARTICULARLY THOSE CONCERNED IN THE

COLONIAL INTEREST THEREOF,

AND THOSE IMMEDIATELY ENGAGED

IN THE AFRICAN SLAVE COMMERCE.

GENTLEMEN,

TO you, who are so intimately acquainted with the high and indispensible advantages of Commerce in general; to you who are so deeply experienced in its essential importance to the British Empire, in particular; and, to you whose eminence, and opulence, depend so entirely upon its support and improvement: It would be, perhaps, unnecessary to observe, that any policy, which militates against the interest thereof, must be unwise and unjust, both in its principles and consequences; but, to the Public at large, its inestimable value cannot possibly be so manifest—Through you, Gentlemen, it may be, nay, it actually

is, necessary to announce to the People of this happy Country, that COMMERCE is the principal basis of their prosperity.

HOWEVER exalted and sublime; however illustrious, and noble; however independent, and honourable; other CLASSES of SOCIETY may be, the great Commercial Bodies of this, and, perhaps, of every other Nation, in the civilized world, are those only, whose TITLES to universal approbation appear INDUBITABLE, and whose CLAIMS upon UNIVERSAL CONCURRENCE are fully admitted.

WHILE the rage of AMBITION, the rancor of MALICE, the guilt of ENVY, and the fury of ENTHUSIASM, arraign the rights, and destroy the harmony of other systems, that of COMMERCE alone, founded as it is, upon its own inherent qualities; and, cherished by YOUR liberal spirit and integrity, seems to defy the assaults of Time, and the machinations of Human turpitude.

LAWS may change their form; CONSTITUTIONS may be subverted; EMPIRES may be overthrown; but, in the midst of anarchy, and tumult, the PRINCIPLES of COMMERCE are found to be inviolable; and, its EFFECTS in Society the same. It commenced with the Creation of Mankind, and it must continue while the wants and infirmities of mankind shall have existence. In short, of COMMERCE, it may truly be said, that, as it is inseparable from human condition, and

essential

essential to human support, and improvement; society should be tenacious of its accustomed privileges, and watchful of every infringement that might possibly reduce its interests. But, although the fundamental principles of Commerce are rendered thus immutable by necessity, weak and inconsiderate expedients may, now and then, impede its regular progress, and turn its golden currents from those proper channels, to which wisdom and nature direct them, it never fails, in its long course, to collect fresh strength, and spirit, by resistance; and, when driven by bad policy, from one place, to establish all its importance in another.

SHOULD the enemies of the Slave Trade, succeed, in the destructive measure of ABOLITION in THIS COUNTRY, certain it is, that OTHER NATIONS, conscious of its high value, would, wisely, grasp at the occasion, and by adoption and encouragement, prosper upon our absurdity. Our DESOLATED COLONIES, would still remain objects of allurement to strangers, and the adventurous alien, thrive upon the spirit and industry of our Ancestors.

THE veneration which naturally attaches to the COMMERCE of this Country—to a system of so much universal authority and advantage, is, of itself, sufficient, to command the most spirited exertions of human ability, in opposition to every measure that may be conceived as trenching upon its privileges, or as obstructive to its progressive improvement. But,

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in addition to the great weight of such specific considerations, the supervenient evils, attending the present attempt upon the Trade in Question, are such, as to stimulate the vigilance of every sensible, and every virtuous individual.

THE irreparable injury, which our Merchants and Manufacturers will suffer, should so weak, and I will add, so unjust an attempt succeed—its consequences to our Marine influence; and, its effects upon the Public Revenue—but, above all, the ruin into which it would heap our West-India Possessions, are considerations of the first magnitude—They are considerations, Gentlemen, which I flatter myself, will fully justify this APPEAL to your judgment and influence, and will, no doubt, excite resistance, as well from principles of public spirit, as from motives of private advantage.

IN the course of the following Letters, which I have Addressed to one of the greatest ornaments of this country; and who, through the whole of his Ministry, has been followed by the approbation and gratitude of a discerning Public, I have endeavoured to prove, not only, the political NECESSITY, but the MORAL and RELIGIOUS BENEFITS of the Slave Commerce, when directed by wise, and merciful, regulations: How far I may have been competent to the task, your judgment must decide.

FOR

For the greater circulation, and convenience, of the Public, these Letters appeared, originally, in a respectable Weekly News-Paper; and, it is with peculiar satisfaction I observe, that in the crude and disadvantageous manner of such Publications, they have been read with much attention, both in this, and the sister Kingdom. So far as written attestations, and common report, may be admitted as Evidence in their favour, they have already obtained a kind of Interlocutory Judgment, and which the Author flatters himself, will ultimately be succeeded, by a full verdict in favour of this important Branch of Commerce.

With a view to promote the true Commercial Interests of this Country, they are now presented in a more correct state; and, if they should be so fortunate as to have a proper weight with the Legislature, in that respect, their purposes will be fully accomplished.

ALFRED.

LETTERS OF ALFRED;

TO THE

Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

LETTER I.

UNDER a Government like that of Great Britain, humanity seldom or never wants for Advocates. It is congenial and concomitant with that pure freedom, which, under the favour of Divine Providence, manifested in the wisdom of our unequalled Constitution, we, the Inhabitants of this Country, so happily enjoy.

IT is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that an object so capable of benevolent contemplation as the COMMERCE of the HUMAN SPECIES, should affect the Public mind with emotions of the most generous and noble nature: Neither, is it at all extraordinary, that under such an influence, the Public mind should be tenderly susceptible of every impression proceeding from apparent Philanthropy.

NOTHING possibly can be more acceptable in the eye of Heaven; nothing more necessary in that of reason, than the improvement and happiness of our Fellow-creatures: But, such is the inherent weakness of Human Nature, that by an over-

zeal in the progress of that improvement, we frequently defeat the virtue of our best intentions; such is, in fact, the imbecility of man; such the defect of Human Wisdom, that is, of the highest powers which reason can exert, that the greatest Legislators, both ancient and modern, have framed laws for the peace and improvement of Society, which subsequent experience and prudence have condemned. From hence a melancholy thought arises, a thought that shakes the ground-work of Man's vanity: for, alas! let him elevate his endeavours, the highest degree to which the Soul is capable of being stretched in promoting Virtue, it is not quite impossible, but he may fail in the attainment of his wishes.

But this reflection, however disagreeable, should by no means damp the spirit, or check the propensity to virtue: It is, indeed, principally introduced here to shew, that even you (distinguished as you are for knowledge and moderation, for equity, and for justice) may not, at the same time, be entirely exempt from that general error, which appears to be, the certain lot, more or less, of Mankind.

It is the duty, Sir, of every true Patriot, of every distinguished Member of the Legislature; to seek, discover, and adopt expedients of moral and political utility: and, I am persuaded, that the Honourable Gentleman, who, with so much pains and perseverance brought forward, and has pursued the measure of Abolition, COMMENCED that business with every sentiment of, and view to, public advantage. He could not, possibly, have selected a project more seductive to popularity, nor, in some instances, by the exposure of inordinate abuses, more acceptable to justice and to mercy.

But, however laudable, this Honourable Philanthropist might have been in the origin of the Slave Business, it is to me, and to thousands more, a matter of much surprise and disapprobation, that the great developement has not, at this day, convinced him of the cruelty, the absurdity, nay, the gross impolicy of the proposed measure. I have not the honour of being, in any degree, acquainted with Mr. WILBERFORCE, or his character, except, as an avowed, and pertinacious enemy to the

SLAVE

Slave Commerce: I am equally ignorant of his general Legislative capacity, and cannot presume to form any certain judgment upon his extent of talent; but, in the long and minute series of the Slave Question, I am free to confess, that I observe him in many instances defective. He has listened and believed with credulity: he has asserted without sufficient information: and, he has adjudged without evidence: I mean evidence, under the legal and rational construction of that word. In his sympathetic tenderness for Foreign Oppression, he has been guilty of domestic cruelty; and from an universal and indiscriminate condemnation, he has passed sentence upon, and endeavoured to punish, by universal and indiscriminate abhorrence, a body of men, to whom the Revenue, the Marine, and the Manufactures of the Nation are under the highest obligations: I mean, Sir, the Merchants, and others, concerned, under the authority of the Law, in the Slave Commerce.

As there are some men who mistake ferocity for courage, so, there are others, who adopt inflexibility for resolution. It is too commonly the case, that, when Public Projectors once make up their minds, and communicate their expedients, they cannot be prevailed upon to relinquish, or even to relax their opinions. It is not, I confess, the nature of sound judgment to change and fluctuate; but it is the duty of sound sense to hear argument, and to acknowledge error; and the man, who either from pride or impatience, refuses his attention, or resists his conviction in this respect, is, in my opinion, ineligible to public function.

From particular circumstances, Sir, in my life, it has been, in some degree, incumbent upon me to consider attentively the progress of your Ministerial movements. Before you were called to the high station which you now possess, and which is rendered still more elevated by the vigour of your abilities, I had, also, some little interest in observing your professional advances, and although I entertained a very favourable opinion of your *legal* talents, I confess, from your extreme youth, and the powerful veteran Opposition which I knew you had to contend with, I did not expect your Official Existence would be of

long duration. Every day, however, has convinced me more and more of my own ignorance or want of penetration, and I now find, with the rest of the World, that instead of a Meteor, as which I first beheld you, you are become a fixed, and I may add, a saving luminary in the Political Hemisphere of this great and rising country. When I view your public evolutions upon every occasion, ONE excepted, I am inclined (whenever THAT ONE obtrudes itself) to impute its defects to the weakness of my own mental optics; and, in truth, (such is my respect and veneration) I have taken uncommon pains, by deliberate investigation, to detect, if possible, my own judgment: But, having fully divested myself of every possible prejudice, and having admitted the utmost scope to every argument made use of by you and others, in support of Mr. WILBERFORCE's Bill, can I behold it still in no other light, than that of INHUMANITY, INJUSTICE, and INEXPEDIENCY

IT is not my intention, Sir, at this time, to trouble you or the public, with any inquiry into the origin and rights of Slavery: much pains and much time have been already exhausted upon those topics; and, after all which has been said, and all that has been written by the best authorities, they still remain in very great obscurity. If it were immediately necessary, I am bold in asserting, that in a very few Pages, I could advance an Hypothesis, and deduce a few inferences more probable, and of course, more rational, than any which have (at least to my knowledge) been offered to the Public: But, it is fully sufficient for my present purpose to observe, what the most enthusiastic Abolitionist will not presume to deny, that Slavery, or in other words, the Commerce of the Human Species has existed on the Coast, and in the interior parts of the Continent of Africa, for the whole term of History and Tradition. That wars, in those parts, from the same remote periods, have been, invariably, as fierce and sanguinary as at this day; that crimes and punishments have ever been the same; and, in short, that all the great sources of captivity were open and productive, even before the name of Europe was ever heard of in that quarter of the Globe.

These are facts too well supported by known and approved authorities, to demand additional Evidence; facts, which every one, at all acquainted with the History of the World, must acknowledge; and facts from whence the inference is manifest, that, as such *was* the state of Africa before the Inhabitants of Europe had any intercourse therewith, such *would be* the state of Africa, should Europe entirely withdraw her Commerce.

In what respect, then, would Africa derive any benefit? In what respect, (supposing the dereliction to be universal) even then, would the cause of humanity be improved? Would the Slave, brought from the centre of the country, as at this day, for sale to a European Master, be no more a Slave, because no Traders should be found upon the Coast to purchase him? Would the condition of such Slave be in any respect amended? I will take upon me to answer, that for a certain period, until the determination of Europe should be fully known on the Continent of Africa, the positive consequences to Slaves intended for Sale on the Coast, where no Purchasers should be found, would be, inevitable death. But, as soon as the adoption of Europe should be published among the nations of Africa, then, the Savage Conqueror, and the itinerant Merchant, would turn their backs upon the Coast, and transfer their Commerce to other boundaries: then, the Markets of Morocco, of Nubia, of Egypt, of Turkey, and of India, would be more crowded: And, then the Slaves, at least so many as are now imported to our Colonies, instead of being treated with civilized and Christian lenity, and protected, by wise and merciful laws, would become subject to the more uncontrolled, and merciless barbarity of men, who, in respect to the treatment of their Slaves, are subject to no laws, but those of interest, caprice, or revenge.

The Friends of Abolition, may probably, here suspect, that I decline to mention that cruel mode of obtaining Slaves, called *Kidnapping*; nor of certain other devices, which European Nations (especially England) are charged with encouraging. I confess, Sir, that the systems of *Kidnapping*, and securing men by the sagacity of *large trained Dogs*, appear to me altogether futile

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and ridiculous: However, as such stories have been carefully disseminated, and some are unaccountably induced to believe in them, they must not pass entirely unnoticed. The horror of such practices insinuates, into the minds even of the most discriminating and cautious, what then must be its effects upon weakness and credulity?

In judging upon Evidence in all well-regulated cases, there are certain established rules, by which the developement of truth is most likely to be obtained. In all subjects of public controversy, where the evidence of facts cannot be formally ascertained, the wisdom and sagacity of those who are to decide upon the questions, must be directed to probability and presumption: Let me, therefore make, first, a short statement, and then examine the kind of Evidence by which that statement is attempted to be proved.

Fifty Thousand Slaves, say the Abolitionists, are annually Kidnapped on the Continent of Africa; and this barbarous practice is inhumanly encouraged and supported by the Slave Commerce of Europe: Such is, in brief, the case stated by the Friends of Abolition.

Let us now examine the Evidence:——

Mr. Wadstrom had been upon the Coast of Africa for four months. He travelled from Senegal almost to Gambia, and was much on shore. He says, that the people of Demel frequently seize the Subjects of *other Kingdoms* as they travel; or, such as live upon the Frontiers of neighbouring States, and send them, as Slaves, on board such ships as may be at hand: But Mr. Wadstrom confesses, that this may be considered as a *Contraband Trade, and is punishable* by the laws of the country: He, also, confines the practice to the Kingdom of Demel solely.

Dr. Sparman says, speaking of Senegal, Goree, and Shecal, that numbers are privately Kidnapped, by being invited to the houses of others and seized; and, also, by being seized in the night.

Sir George Yonge states, that the Slaves are obtained by force and treachery: He does not, however, speak from *his own knowledge*, but from reports made by the Kings of the Country, and from an American Trader. He purchased a Child, who had been stolen, for a Quarter-cask of Madeira. Sir George saw in several Canoes upon the River Andree, on the Grain-Coast, some men seven feet high, who were apprehensive of being Kidnapped: And he concludes his Evidence, by observing, that they generally Kidnap the Subjects of *different States*; the Sovereign would not allow them to Kidnap their Fellow-subjects, as he would be a loser by it; but he probably authorises the Kidnapping of Subjects of other States, because he has a duty upon Slaves brought into his Country.

Mr. Eldred was told by some, that they had been Trepanned; but, never knew an instance himself.

To the above Evidence of Kidnapping must be added, that individual Slaves, upon being questioned, as to the cause of their captivity, have declared, they were taken by surprize in the fields, and at watering places.

Having thus stated the material Evidence in support of Kidnapping, it becomes necessary to state to you and the public, the authentic body of positive proof by which the charge of Kidnapping is opposed: I will say by which it ought to be entirely extinguished, in the mind of every fair and candid observer.

Mr. Barnes, upon whose judgment and veracity it is needless to make any comment, resided in Africa a Governor, and as a Merchant, for eight years: He had been a Resident in Senegal, at Gambia, and in the Bite of the Benin, *and he never knew of any Country where Kidnapping was practised, or where the Constitution of the Country would admit it.*

General Rooke says, that a proposal was once made to him, to invite Negroes to an entertainment, and send them on board some Ships to sell them, but he refused it with indignation; and upon inquiry among the Marabous, *he did not find that such a thing had ever been done in the Country.*

Captain

Captain Heatley, after giving a very satisfactory account how Slaves were obtained, says, he never knew of any being Kidnapped. It would be *impossible for Europeans to Kidnap them; and he never heard of a single instance of their being Kidnapped by each other.*

In speaking of the Windward-coast, Mr. Norris says, that the Country from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas, is divided into small Districts, and that the Villages are governed by old men: That as there is no union or regular Government, they are *in frequent hostility:* That the traveller, (no doubt the enemy) is sometimes way-laid and sold for a Slave; and that this is what is understood by the term Kidnapping.

Mr. Miles, for the long term of sixteen years, was a Resident and Governor in Africa, and *never so much as heard of any Slaves being Kidnapped*, either by the Europeans or by each other; and this Gentleman, as well as Mr. Barnes, and others, speaks of the practice being *impossible*, on account of the Police of the Country, &c. &c.

Mr. Weuves, who had been fourteen years a Resident and Governor of different Settlements on the Coast, says positively, that *Kidnapping could not be possible*; the Inhabitants of the Country are universally known, and if such a thing was attempted, there would be a hue and cry from every one.

This, Sir, is briefly the whole Evidence given in support of, and in contradiction to, the practice of Kidnapping; and it is, indeed, almost unnecessary to remark, at which side the weight preponderates. I do not mean to impute either design or misrepresentation to the first: On the contrary, I would, if possible, extenuate the effects of refutation, by admitting, that the several Gentlemen who attempted to support the practice, must have been mis-informed by those of whom they made their enquiries: At best, the whole is but a loose and irregular chain of *hearsay* Evidence, except that given by Dr. Sparman and Sir George Yonge. The Dr. speaks, or seems to speak, as of his own knowledge; and Sir George gives an instance of a boy who had been stolen. Numbers, says Dr. Sparman, are Kidnapped,

napped, by being invited to the houses of others; and, also, by being seized in the night.

But it is rather extraordinary, that this sort of *violent*, *contraband* custom, should at all exist, in a country, where, we are told, the laws are rigidly enforced: And, it is wonderful, supposing a criminal connivance, or neglect of the Magistracy, that after the experience of so many Centuries, reason alone among the Natives would not induce a degree of caution, sufficient to avoid such treacherous conspiracies. Every animal, nay every reptile, is taught, by instinct, to know, and guard, against its enemy; but, from the several accounts given of Kidnappers on the Continent of Africa, it appears, as if, not only, the laws of the country were totally ineffectual, but the great universal law of self-preservation was unknown.

Sir George Yonge's account of the beautiful boy whom he saved from drowning or starving, by the barter of a Quarter-cask of Madeira, is also a little singular. The boy, Sir George says, was too young for sale, and therefore the Kidnappers were going to throw him over-board, and refused to give him food; but, one should really wonder, that men accustomed to such practices, would not be better acquainted with the demands of the market, than to give themselves the unnecessary trouble of stealing what they must, one would think, have known to be unfit for sale.

I will not assume, Sir, to deny positively, that a custom which we, now and then, find practised, even in the great Capital of the British Empire, is totally unknown, and unpractised in Africa: But, from the Evidence of the several Gentlemen who gave testimony against the practice there, Gentlemen long resident, and supported both by veracity, and local knowledge; from the evidence of reason; nay, even from the evidence on the other side, I am bold in asserting, as a plain and positive fact, that the proportion of Slaves obtained by that means, is not so much as the stream of a purling brook, is to the torrent of the largest River on the Continent of Africa. Indeed, the whole of this exaggerated and mistaken business, appears not only to be fully refuted, but accounted for, by Mr. Norris, who says, that

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the different Districts and Villages are in frequent hostility, and the Travellers belonging to each District in that state of warfare, are sometimes way-laid and taken prisoners: And, there can be no doubt, but, to this mode of *capturing the enemy*, may be imputed all the multiplied and melancholy stories of Kidnapping, which have been imposed upon the Public.

I HAVE but a few words more to say upon the subject of Kidnapping, a subject which I should not have dwelt upon with so much attention, but, that I well know the indirect manner in which it is made use of, to strengthen public prejudice against the Slave Trade.

MR. CLARKSON, in *devising means* for raising his annual host of 100,000 Slaves, says, that the Kidnappers surprize them from behind hedges, and from concealments in long grass, in their passage to, and from, the Springs of Water. Now, Sir, I have particularly inquired into the situation of the several Villages, and find, that the universal custom of the Country is, to build them close to those Springs; and, indeed, the apparent advantages thereof, leave no room to doubt of the fact: It is, therefore, demonstrative, that such journies must be either the mere visions of fancy, or the fabrications of design and falshood.

MR. CLARKSON, in his *impolicy* of the SLAVE TRADE, *sometimes* takes occasion to represent the Natives of Africa as the most sagacious beings in the universe. Is it reasonable, therefore, to imagine, that people so endowed by nature, would not contrive some effectual means of security; or, that in defence of themselves and relatives, wives, children, and parents, they would not unite in bodies, and exterminate a Banditti so dangerous to Society; a Banditti, (if Mr. CLARKSON be believed) which, in the captivity of Fifty Thousand People annually, must swarm the earth, and be more terrifying to personal security, than the Lions, Tygers, and other ferocious and insatiate Beasts that infest the Forests; or, is it to be seriously thought, that Sovereigns, despotic and sanguinary in the extreme, whose grandeur, and whose enjoyments are derived from the great source of Slavery, would admit of depredations so injurious to both the one and the other.

LETTER II.

ALTHOUGH, from a very early period of the Bill now depending in Parliament, for an Abolition of the Slave Commerce, my sentiments, in respect to your Public conduct, have been very different from those excited by every other part of your Administration; and, although, I always have held you peculiarly responsible, for the consequences of that measure, I should not, probably, have made you the particular object of these Letters, but for the perusal of a small Pamphlet which was presented to me some time since. As this Pamphlet was put into my hands, by an unknown person in the Public streets, I conceived it to be a specimen of those little artifices, which I knew to have been long practised by the ACTIVE Agents of the Old Jewry, in order to raise the prejudices, and inflame the passions of the credulous.

UNDER such an impression, it would have been treated with that indifference, I may say contempt, which I supposed it really merited; but, I happened by accident to observe, on the Title-page, a Name, which can never fail of creating both interest and respect in the mind of every good and grateful Citizen and Subject: such were the sentiments which the name of WILLIAM PITT instantaneously excited in my mind. Upon examination, I found it was a SPEECH imputed to you, on a Motion for an ABOLITION of the SLAVE TRADE, in the House of Commons, on Monday the 2d of April, 1792; and I naturally expected to find in it, a full display of that persuasive eloquence, which is so conspicuous, and so captivating in all your Parliamentary declamations; but, whether from the lateness of the hour, and the exhausted state to which you acknowledged you were then reduced, or whether from the injustice of the Reporter, I cannot possibly determine; it certainly did not square with those great and animated powers, which I had been accustomed to admire and venerate.

You commence, with observing, that the Debate of that night had taken a turn, which, though it produced a variety of new suggestions, had, upon the whole, contracted the Question into a much narrower point than it was ever brought into before: For, that there were few who had spoken on that night, that did not think it their duty to declare, their full and entire concurrence with the Honourable Gentleman, who proposed the measure of Abolition, as their ultimate object.

Allow me, to remark, Sir, that few indeed, on that night, thought it very essential to speak at all upon the Question. Every thing that the complete Evidence of local experience could establish; every thing that good sense, sound judgment, and deliberate observation could dictate, had already been urged against the measure: Yet, there were some Gentlemen, and those too of distinguished character and ability, who thought it their duty, even on that memorable night, to oppose with decision, the object of Debate.

Such, however, were the effects of misrepresentation, exaggeration, and falshood; such, the impetuosity of prejudice, that continued endeavours of *direct* opposition, might, instead of preventing, have, perhaps, finally determined its destructive consequences. After the Motion of Mr. Dundas, and the concurrent sentiments of the Speaker, there was no room to doubt what would be the issue of that night: that the premeditated evil would be at least delayed, so as to give time for the further effects of reason and reflection: Under such circumstances, it truly became the duty, even of those who utterly disproved the measure, to accept the best and only medium that offered; and, to concur with a proposal, which, by diverting for a time the head-strong impetuosity of enthusiasm, might in the end prevent its mischiefs. So far, therefore, but no further, did the Abolition of the Slave Trade *appear* to be an ultimate object of concurrence: The appearance was, however, but the mere *pro tempore* adoption of a judicious alternative; the seeming acquiescence of the moment, and a kind of indispensible retreat, in order to collect fresh vigour for a more resolute and collected resistance.

You observed, that the great point was on that night gained—that the Trade had on that night received its *condemnation*——that its *sentence* was then *sealed*; and, that mankind was, by the concurrence of that night, to be relieved from the greatest CURSE, and PRACTICAL EVIL that ever afflicted the human race.

IT is, Sir, supposing you to be as genuine in your sentiments as you were strong in your expressions, that I shall, in this Letter, endeavour to prove, from the highest of all authorities, if we at all believe and reverence the writings of God's chosen, and immediate Agents, and the authority of Divine Inspiration, that the Commerce of the Human Species, so far from being a DISGRACE, and a STIGMA, and a CURSE, as you emphatically pronounce it, upon the National Character, is, when governed by prudent, and salutary regulations, an honour to, and a DUTY incumbent upon, every Christian Nation.

IN every case, good and evil, the actions of Mankind are directed by an inward Monitor—*Conscience*—which, according to St. Paul, is given "By the inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine; for reproof; for correction; for instruction in righteousness; that the MEN of GOD may be PERFECT, and thoroughly furnished unto all GOOD WORKS." Let us therefore resort to the early periods, and observe how far the MOST HOLY and JUST Men; thus made PERFECT in all good works, were concerned in the Commerce of the Human Species.

LET us enquire, Whether any of those immediately INSPIRED by GOD, and holding express communication with his Divine prescience, were ever engaged, and by what authority, in such traffic. If, upon such enquiry, into the most authentic of all Histories, the sacred History of the Bible, we find, that the most immaculate, and chosen; such as were found highly worthy of God's distinguished favour, were encouraged, nay, commanded by him, to pursue that Commerce; we will, in my opinson, and I trust, in the opinion of mankind, not to be so presumptuous as to brand it with impious epithets.

ST. Luke, that eloquent Evangelist, in speaking of Abraham, his purity, and his holiness, likens him to ONE of HEAVEN! and yet,

yet, with all his celestial assimilations, Abraham, the good and great Patriarch, Abraham, PURCHASED Slaves with his MONEY, and sold them to other Masters, agreeably to the unlimited nature of his title. What may also seem extraordinary, to those who reprobate the Commerce, and brand it with epithets of abomination; is that those very Slaves by means of their captivity, were made eligible to the freedom of Heaven, and worthy of eternal happiness! that is, they were brought within the pale of Salvation, and thereby received the Seal of the Covenant of Abraham, for himself, and his posterity; they were no longer accounted aliens and strangers, as the Nations from whence they came, but were grafted into the family of the People of God, to partake of the holy things. Lev. Chap. xxii. Ver. 10. "There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the Priest, or an hired servant shall not eat of the holy thing; but, if the Priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it." And again, in Exodus, Chap. xii. Ver. 42. "And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the Ordnance of the Passover; there shall no stranger eat thereof, but every Man-servant that is BOUGHT for MONEY, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof." From these Divine attestations and commands, therefore, we find to a degree of positive demonstration, that the most highly favoured of God, the most pure, the most holy, and the most righteous, were in the constant practice of buying and selling the Human Species; nay, that GOD himself was, by attestation and express command, a party in the Commerce.

I TRUST, that in respect and deference to common sense, I shall not be here told, by some mortified Abolitionist, that all this was under the OLD LAW, which the CHRISTIAN dispensation has altered or prohibited.

THE great Author, Sir, of that superlative dispensation, came to fulfil the predictions, or prophecies of the Old Law; by his Passion and Death, the symbols, and sacrifices, and ceremonies, of the Old Law became unnecessary; but, let no man be weak enough to conceive, or impious enough to publish, that the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ, could alter the sacred, essential,

sential, and immutable qualities of vice and virtue, or make THAT a CRIME at this day, which was, at any other period, a VIRTUE, practised by the chosen People of God, and authorized by his Divine attestations, regulations, and commands :— And it may here, with propriety, be remarked, that the great Mediator and Saviour, whose unremitting practice it was to preach, and give examples of Religious and Moral duties; and, in whose days, Slavery was as prevalent and universal as at any other time, does not appear in any of his Discourses, to touch, in the least degree, upon that condition, (at least in any of those Discourses which I have met with). His precepts are Faith, Hope, Charity, and Universal Love ; but he does not, (at least to my knowledge) recommend an Abolition of a Commerce, which existed in his days of Divine Mission, to the full as prevalent as it now does.

WHATEVER might have been the motive of Providence, for suffering great distinctions in the several states and conditions of Mankind, is, I believe, one of those inscrutable secrets that will always remain in profound obscurity .All we know, is, that God for purposes, which must be necessarily wise and just, has ordained and suffered such distinctions, and that one part of his Creatures should remain in a state of subordination and servitude to the other.

FROM the great authorities which I have here mentioned, we find, that in the remotest periods, there were Nations in the same kind of uncultivated and idolatrous situations, in which Africa is at this day. By such authorities, we find, that the People of those Nations were consigned, I will say, in mercy consigned to the Slavery of others, by whom they were, at the same time, made capable of ETERNAL FREEDOM. This eternal benefit, did not, however, deprive Abraham and his posterity of their absolute right of earthly possession; for, we find in Lev. Chap. XXV. Ver. 44. it is thus emphatically written, " Both the BOND-MEN and the BOND-MAIDS which thou *shalt* have, *shall* be of the Heathen that are round about you; of them *shall* ye buy BOND-MEN and BOND-MAIDS. Moreover, of the Children of the stranger that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy,

and

and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land, and they SHALL be your POSSESSIONS: and ye shall take them as an Inheritance for your Children after you, to *inherit* them for a POSSESSION; they SHALL be your BOND-MEN for EVER."

SINCE, therefore, the Almighty chose, in those early ages, to make Slavery the medium of eternal freedom, by bringing the Heathen of that day into the pale of Salvation; will it be denied, that by the like means, we may not remove the Heathen of the present day, from his state of reprobation, and make him also by a similar servitude, equally capable of future happiness. The Baptism of the New Law, and the Circumcision of the Old Law, are in effect exactly the same; they are both outward and visible Signs of inward and Spiritual Grace; and if the Slave of Antiquity by the one was made worthy of the Passover; by the other, the Slave of the present day, may surely be made eligible to the Eucharist.

I WILL not, Sir, presume to judge, what may be the FUTURE STATE of gross idolatry, or of invincible ignorance; but this I will be bold to say, from the insuperable authority of GOD himself, that it is not EQUAL to that of RELIGIOUS IMPROVEMENT; if it were, then all those particular injunctions and encouragements given by the Almighty to the Proprietors of ancient Slaves, and to the Slaves themselves, would have been absurd and useless: And, then, the Slaves of the present day, in respect to futurity, might as well remain barbarous and idolatrous.

How many Africans are there, at this time in our several Colonies, who being redeemed from the impious tyranny of their own nations, and from the bondages of infernal custom, are become indisputable heirs of liberty, in its highest and most durable sense: who, by being Slaves to rational and good men, are made acceptable to the immutable and everlasting servitude of the Almighty? How many, who being brought from a situation, preferred through ignorance, to a situation, which they now approve of from comparison, think themselves blest, and happy in the change? How many, who are sensible, and grateful, from moral improvement and protection, and who look forward

ward with an humble hope and cheerful expectation, of Eternal and Heavenly relaxation, from the labours of this earth?

THERE are numbers of Slaves, Sir, in America and our Colonies, who, from the instruction of good men and masters, have as clear, and as sublime an idea of Christianity, as have the general mass of European peasantry, and the lower classes of the people. How then, in the name of truth, honour, and religion; how in the name of moral advantage, and interchangeable convenience, can a Commerce productive of such good, be branded with the opprobrious epithets of inhumanity and injustice? How can that which bears the express evidence of God's attestation, care, and positive command, be called a curse and a stigma upon mankind? The same idolatry which surrounded the enlightened world in the days of Abraham, surrounds the enlightened world at this moment; the same occasion for religious and moral charity; the same opportunities of religious and moral improvement. Let no man, however endowed with political wisdom, with the captivating powers of oratorical energy, with all the happy facilities of conducting a free and a grateful people: Let no man, I say, even thus accomplished by nature and education, conceive himself more wise than his Creator. Let the ignorance and idolatry of the present day, be dealt with agreeably to the express word of GOD in old times; and let us, by the continued purchase of Bond-men and Bond-women with our money, make them capable of that eternal liberty, that superior future felicity, which is the promised lot of those who are brought within the pale of Salvation. Suffer the great ability which you are blessed with, to extend itself to the prevention of enormities in the Slave Commerce, to the institution of humane laws. In short, make the captivity of Slaves as easy, the yoke as light, as humanity may dictate, but do not permit prejudices, produced by the misrepresentations of designing and visionary men, to abuse those finer faculties; nor, by one rash and unjustifiable measure, to sully the steady radiance of your public and private reputation.

IN addressing you, Sir, I mean to address the whole nation, but more particularly that august body of the Constitution, with

whom the measure of Abolition now rests, and among whom are characters, as illustrious for learning and wisdom, as for dignity of birth and station: they will, I have no doubt, review the great subject with religious as well as political circumspection, and prevent, by their constitutional function, an Abolition as injurious to Christian Charity, as it is to the interest of the Nation.

LETTER III.

IN the two former Letters, which I had the honour of addressing to you, I endeavoured, by Divine and rational evidence, to vindicate the COMMERCE of the HUMAN SPECIES, from the charges of inhumanity and injustice; and, to redeem it from that odium, which has been the result of misrepresentation and falsehood: I also endeavoured to prove, that the CONCURRENCE of the 2d of April, had not actually, for its ULTIMATE OBJECT, the ABOLITION so sedulously sought for, by Mr. WILBERFORCE, and the Advocates for his Bill; but was, in fact, the political and necessary acquiescence of an exhausted moment, with a view to collect fresh strength for a future and more vigorous opposition. How far I may have succeeded, in your judgment, it is impossible for me to determine; but, I have had the satisfaction of hearing the opinion of very sensible men, delivered in favour of my observations, and conclusions, upon the debate of that night; and I cherish an humble confidence, that I shall in the end, by my endeavours, disperse the baleful illusion by which this NECESSARY COMMERCE is traduced, calumniated, and, in the minds of too many, convicted of inexpedience and injustice.

WHEN I reflect upon the number of years, during which the SLAVE TRADE has been approved of, and encouraged by solemn Acts of the Legislature: When I consider the wisdom, the justice

tice, and the philanthropy of the Men and Ministers by whom it has been thus approved of and encouraged: When I contemplate the high authorities in its support, and the indispensible necessity of its continuation, I should be lost in astonishment, at any inconsiderate and intemperate attempt against it; but, that, in the MANIA of REFORMATION, by which whole Empires are, at this awful period, scourged and convulsed, I behold a variety of measures insisted upon, even more incongruous, unnatural, and impolitic. The subversion of religious and moral order; the encouragement of violence and assassination! the butchery of brave and innocent citizens! and the insult and degradation of God's anointed! In the awful contemplation of such extraordinary and outrageous proceedings, I observe with horror, to what impious excesses the influence of enthusiasm *may* extend; but I flatter myself, that the sublime tranquillity of my NATIVE COUNTRY, the gracious sovereignty of a BELOVED MONARCH, and the established wisdom of a virtuous ADMINISTRATION, will, at all times repel the dangerous spirit of public phrensy, and afford a happy opportunity for the exercise of cool and dispassionate reflection, in respect to every projected measure of the Legislature; thus, by comparison, is my astonishment abated, and my hopes, as they refer to the point under immediate consideration, strengthened and encouraged.

IT was sensibly observed, by one of your Right Honourable Friends, on the night of the 2d April, that no Act of the British Legislature could secure an Abolition of the Slave Trade: this, however, you undertook to combat and overcome, by a great variety of observations and inferences: You alledged, that an Act inforced by all those sanctions, which the Legislature has the POWER and the RIGHT to apply, would effectuate, at least, to every material purpose, such an Act. That the EXECUTIVE POWER would have the same appointment of its Officers, and of the Courts of Judicature, by which all causes relating to this subject would be tried; That there would be the same system of laws, by which we now maintain a monopoly of Commerce; and that, when the same laws should be applied to the prohibition of the Slave Trade, which are applied in cases of other Contraband

Commerce, with all the same means of the country to back them, the object would with equal facility be effected. In this manner, it was, according to the printed Speech, that you endeavoured to rebut the arguments of your Right Honourable Friend.

BUT there is, Sir, a very wide and essential difference between RIGHT founded in EQUITY, and the general CONCURRENCE of those most sensibly and immediately effected by submission; and RIGHT supported, merely by compulsory authority, which, as to immediate consequences, may, in some degree, be called extraneous. No man can deny the POWER of this Nation over its Colonies; yet, I believe, it will not be controverted, that a rigid exercise of such power, in support of any COLONIAL object, contrary to the general sense of the Colonists themselves; I may say, in the present instance, contrary to their universal opinion and ASSENT, would be an unwise and dangerous adoption. The RIGHT sustained by power alone, is a kind of *feudal* inheritance, and like the right of conquest, constantly subject to RETRIBUTION and REPRISAL.

WE have, indeed, a recent, shameful, and (in the opinion of some people) a melancholy proof of this truth. The Act of the British Legislature, which imposed a STAMP DUTY on America, against the general assent of that Continent, was certainly founded in strict RIGHT; but, the necessity of a subsequent Act of REPEAL, fully shewed the impolicy of the measure. By opening the eyes of America, and giving her a glimpse of her own importance, that ACT compelled us to relinquish for ever, all pretentions to other rights, and, in the end, gave the Colonists that independence, which, however fortunate, or otherwise to them, has stampt the British character, during the time of the struggle, at least with reproach and disgrace. After all the energies of Governors, the adjudications of Judges, the activity of Revenue Officers, and all the boasted POWER and OMNIPOTENCE of the British Parliament, we were compelled to abandon *for ever*, all our supposed unquestionable rights over the Colonies of America.

THE inference from this, Sir, is almost too evident to admit of explanation. I shall, therefore, only say, that, supposing the West-India Colonies to be nearly unanimous (which I think will not be denied) in their opposition to the measure of Abolishing the Slave Trade, there will be EXTREME DANGER in attempting to enforce submission.

You may, indeed, without much risque of extreme danger, prevent the subjects of Great Britain from trading in British vessels to the coast of Africa for Slaves; but you cannot by any power, or under the colour of any right, prevent the subjects of this country, accustomed to that Commerce, and in full experience of its high advantages, from withdrawing themselves and their capitals to other countries, less fastidious and fanatic —Neither can you, without the imminent risks above alluded to, prevent the Colonists from trading with them, as denizens of other nations, nor with the nations to which they may unite themselves and their fortunes. In short, should the Colonists continue to persevere in the opinion, (of which I believe there is scarcely any doubt) that the Commerce of the Human Species is not only humane, but indispensible to their interests, they will endeavour to support it, without recourse to smuggling, or apprehension of the heavy consequences denounced against them.

IT was asserted on the 2d of April, by a Gentleman who spoke against the proposed measure, that in a few years, the Slave Trade would drop of itself; for, that the increasing dearness of Slaves, on the one hand, and the increasing progress on the other, of internal population, under improved regulations, will render importation unnecessary. Of those propositions, with which I by no means agree, you avail yourself with a good deal of apparent triumph: You ask, "Is it true then, that the "importations are so expensive and disadvantageous already, "that the internal population is even now becoming a cheaper "resource?" And you add, that by leaving the importer no other means of importation, but by smuggling, with all its expensive and hazardous consequences, there is no danger of a considerable supply of fresh Slaves poured into the Islands?

WITH

With respect, Sir, to the increasing Population of Slaves, I will contend, that it is by no means so probable as the Gentleman supposes. The demand for fresh Negroes, is at this time as great as at any other given period; and the spirit, and perseverance, with which the Commerce is continued by the several European Nations concerned therein, altogether as active and determined. If the internal population be of so much consequence, as the Gentleman asserts it now is, why do the Planters and others purchase an equal number of Slaves as heretofore, and those too at an advanced price?

An explanation, I fancy, will occupy but little time. In most of our West India Islands, the spirit of cultivation is every day extending itself, and there is no doubt, notwithstanding the determined objections to the extension of insular cultivation, *will continue* to increase its influence, while the advantages resulting therefrom are found considerable: supposing, therefore, that the number of Slaves already in the Colonies, could be kept up, (and I believe that is pretty nearly as much as is hoped for) by means of internal population, the numbers, even then, would be by no means adequate to the great and essential work of cultivation.

Supposing, that by a happy exemption from diseases, to which all persons, in every tropical country are liable; from hurricanes, and other sources of dissolution, the present number of Slaves could be miraculously kept up, would that number bear any proportion to the improvements and advantages of clearing and cultivating lands, which the Proprietors of such land conceive they have an absolute and indefesible right to do? certainly not: I do not mean to deny, that the internal population of Slaves, in the Colonies has been heretofore, in some degree, prevented by inattention; nor, that by means of better usage, the population is not at this time considerably increased; but, I contend for it, that the numbers are not, nor ever will be sufficient, without importation, to perform the necessary progressive labour of the Islands.

I am aware, Sir, without recurring to your Speech of the 2d of April, (in which you say, that the measure of *clearing new lands*

Lands will not now be maintained)—I am well aware of the objection made to that species of improvement; namely, the mortality which it produces; and, that objection, I mean to answer by a physical as well as a moral observation, which, in my judgment, will very considerably, or, perhaps, entirely obviate all the evil effect of its apparent force.

It is a fact, supported by melancholy experience, that the principal cause of contagion, in all climates, but, most particularly in those, where, from intense heat, the exhalations are strongest, is the want of a free circulating air; and, that clearing the land of those impediments, which prevent such free circulation, will produce the most salubrious consequences. In short, it is a demonstrative fact, that the more open the country is, the more wholesome. The question then is, whether by admitting a certain portion of mortality, in a certain *short space of time*, we do not prevent a much greater proportion in a *longer period*? That is, for example, suppose, one hundred men in clearing one hundred acres of land, should die in one year, whether by that means we might not ensure health and longevity to as many thousands for ever? I have called this, a question, but I retract, upon second thought, and pronounce it a proposition irrefragable.

But, admitting the practice of employing Slaves in the improvement and cultivation of Colonial Property, to be unwarrantable—I say, admitting it to be so, *for the sake of observation and argument only*, is it, in any degree more so, than the employment of free Men in the cultivation and improvement of lead, quicksilver, and copper, and such deleterious property in England? If, there be any difference, it is clearly in favour of the former: because, by the labour of the Slaves, you promote health and longevity; by the labour of free Men, you promote little more than the luxuries arising from great wealth.

The principles of humanity are as universal, as they are immutable; the objects of commiseration the same, in every part: but, whether from nature, or the force of prejudice, I care not, The preference given to those among whom we are born and educated, is an expression of that laudable partiality which governs,

verns great and benevolent minds. That charity which manifests itself at home, is the best of all charities: For my own part, when I travel through the several parts of England, which produce these species of unwholesome property, I behold with horror, the pale and squalid spectres which, every now and then start, from the bowels of the earth! and, hovering round the mouths of dismal caverns, seem to anticipate mortality!—I compare them, as free inhabitants, of this free country, with the captive slaves of our colonies, and by a just and unprejudiced review of both, feel a kind of sympathetic envy, at the superior advantages of the latter state.

I WONDER, with what degree of attention, would the Proprietors of lands in Cornwall, Wales, and other places, listen to a motion of *humanity*, which would dispossess them of their several fees of inheritance in this sort of pernicious property. The wretchedness of those unhappy individuals, those nominal sons of freedom, who drag out a miserable existence in the bowels of the dank earth, I know to be remediable; because, felons, and those who have by their crimes forfeited the freedom and protection of their country, might be sentenced to work in the gloomy and deadly regions of mineral property. Yet, I will be bold to pronounce, that no Parliamentary philanthropist, will ever have courage enough, to stand forward, as the avowed advocate of redress for such domestic hardship.

MY opinion therefore is, that, from motives of humanity, as well as justice, we should not only permit the Proprietors of Colonial Property to cultivate their legal possessions, in the only way they possibly can; namely, by the labour of Slaves, but, that we should relieve the rigour of domestic calamity, in free subjects, by substituting the labour of those who have forfeited every participation of equal liberty.

AMONG the various consequences of ill-treatment, that of internal depopulation, among the Colonial Slaves, has been all along mentioned, as a leading motive, for the measure of Abolition. It was, therefore, INGENUOUSLY *(not ingeneously)* remarked in the Debate alluded to, that either the internal population of Slaves must be *decreasing*, or, if *increasing*, that the Slaves must

must be well treated, that being the cause of such population; both, however, of such assertions, are utterly denied, in a way, which, I confess, puzzels my penetration. You admit the Population to be increasing, but you deny that the *treatment*, to which, alone, the Advocates for Abolition, ascribe either Population, or Depopulation, is good; "it is not so good as it ought to be;" and you add, "that the treatment must be ill indeed, that could diminish, materially, the population of any race of people:" that the treatment "is not so bad," you confess; and also, "that the charges brought against the Colonists, in that respect, are exaggerated."

THIS, Sir, would have been a glorious confession to the Colonists, who have so long suffered under the lash of public resentment, if it were not unfortunately and suddenly followed up by observations and arguments, which retract, in express terms, the liberal, though not the plenary absolution with which you indulged them: for, almost with the same breath, you recommend as a duty productive of interest, a correction of those various abuses, *i. e.* ill treatment, by which internal population is restrained. I confess, that my sagacity cannot clearly discover the reconciliation of apparent contradictions, which this part of the printed Speech exhibits. First, the ill treatment of the Slaves is not sufficiently ill to cause any material depopulation; again, the several charges of inhumanity and impolicy, alledged against the Colonists, are exaggerated: And again, in the observations which immediately follow, the Colonists are virtually condemned for impolitical cruelty, and recommended not to pursue a line of conduct so injurious to their own interest. But, although I cannot, Sir, reconcile the inconsistency of those obvious contradictions, I can draw from their invelopement one pleasing inference; that is, that your opinion of the West India Colonists, in respect to humanity and good sense, is, by no means, so unfavourable as their defamers would wish it to be.

I SHALL conclude this Address, Sir, with observing, that if there was not actual employment for the new Slaves at this day in the Colonies, the Trade would drop, or decline so much, that the Slave Merchants, without the imperative command of Parliament,

ment, would very soon discontinue it. If, on the contrary, there be more employment for Slaves at this day, than internal population can produce, (which is, in my opinion sufficiently proved by the constant importation) the consequence of Abolition would be fatal.

LETTER IV.

BY men of narrow and timid dispositions, I may, perhaps, be censured for *repeating* what I have in a former Letter intimated, namely, that the Speech of April the 2d, as stated in the Printed Pamphlet, already mentioned, was not of that eloquent and substantial kind, which the Public have been accustomed to hear from you as a Minister, or as a Member of the British Senate: In my judgment, however, with which I have the concurrence of every liberal man, it is not only consistent with public respect, but essential to public utility, that the wisdom, or even the integrity of a Minister, or Senator, should be questioned upon occasions, which appear to militate against the real interest of the Commonwealth. The respect and veneration which naturally attaches to trust, station, and great talents, ought always to guard against indelicacy, or intemperance of language; but it would be fatal, indeed, to the peculiar liberty, which the subjects of this enlightened and happy Country boast of, should the freedom of public observation and enquiry be restrained, by ideas of servile and false complaisance: such observations, such inquiries, are not only the true criterions of respect, but the genuine supporters of authority; and although, without their attestations, a Minister may possibly escape from censure, it is from them alone he can derive what you so eminently enjoy, the PUBLIC VOICE.

IN my last Letter, Sir, I took the liberty of stating, that the Proprietors of Colonial property, conceiving themselves at full liberty,

liberty, upon every principal of Constitutional Right, were pursuing every possible means of improving, and extending, their several possessions, by the cultivation of uncleared lands; and that, without the importation of Slaves, their estates could not possibly be thus improved and extended. If, my assertions and observations, in this respect, had not been necessary for the public information, they would have been entirely useless; for your declarations on the 2d of April, were in full proof of this last and most important of my statements. The words in the Printed Speech are :—" But if we enter into the subject of the " mortality in clearing new lands, this, Sir, is undoubtedly ano- " ther question : it is not to be considered as the carrying on a " trade, but as setting on foot a Slave Trade;" thereby fully admitting the necessity of the Trade, as it refers to the improvement of property, by the cultivation of uncleared lands, which, as I have already said, the several Proprietors conceive they are justified in doing.

In that Letter, Sir, I not only defend the RIGHT, which the several Proprietors of Colonial Property, conceive they possess, of improving such property; but, endeavoured to justify the MEANS also, which, having no alternative, they are indeed, compelled to adopt, in the application of such right; and, without which, they could not possibly derive any advantage therefrom.

I AM sorry, Sir, to be obliged to detain you and the Public, in any respect, like a certain Reverend Abolitionist, with recitations; but, when I recollect the great stress that has been laid upon the mortality attending the cultivation of uncleared lands in the Colonies, I cannot avoid repeating, under the authority of a conscientious and absolute conviction, and without the vanity of reiterating an undeniable proposition: *That by a certain portion of Mortality, during a certain* SHORT *space of time, employed in the Improvement of Lands, by clearing them of such impediments, as prevent the free circulation of air, we insure health and longevity to thousands or millions* FOR EVER.

AFTER endeavouring, upon principles of truth, justice, and common sense, to vindicate the Commerce of the Human Spe-

 cies,

cies, against those charges of inhumanity and impolicy, which Mr. WILBERFORCE and the several other Gentlemen, who stile themselves Abolitionists, alledge against it: After asserting the impossibility of preventing, with any considerable effect, the continuation of that necessary Commerce; and, after shewing by example, as well as by established precept, the danger of persevering in any measure, *against* the *universal opinion* and *assent* of those, who are to be the most sensibly and immediately effected by a forced submission. A justification of the RIGHT, and the MEANS of improving and extending property, by the clearing of lands in our West-India Colonies, were the leading objects of that address.

THAT part of the Speech of the 2d of April, which next appears, in my opinion, unequal to your usual ability, is where the Legislative Bodies of the West-India Colonies are charged with exposing the weakness of their defence in their respective answers to certain queries, sent over by the Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain, a weakness, which, it is said, generally happens in every bad cause. The question here particularly alluded to, was such as did great honour to the wisdom and humanity of the Committee: The answer, I will contend for it, is not less humane and honourable. The Committee enquired, Whether the Negroes had any days or hours allotted to them, in which they might work for themselves? The Assemblies *(with what is called an air of great satisfaction)* state in their answers, the labour of the Slaves to be moderate, and the West-India system, to be well calculated to promote their domestic happiness: adding, that the Proprietors are not compelled by law, &c. but that it is their general practice to allow their Slaves, one afternoon in every week out of crop time, which, with such hours as they chuse to work on Sundays, is time amply sufficient for their own purposes. " Now, therefore, it is asked, " *Will* the " Negroes, or rather *do* the Negroes *work for their own emolument?*" and here the peculiar attention of the Committee is triumphantly solicited! The Assembly of Grenada, you proceed to say, (and exult in having their own words for it) state, " That " though the Negroes are allowed the afternoon of only one

" day

" day in every week, they will do as much work in that after-
" noon, when employed for their own benefit, as in the whole
" day, when employed in their Master's service."

From these declarations of the Legislative Bodies, are made the following positive inferences: First, That the increased quantity of labour, which is reasonably to be expected from the improved condition of Slaves, will be more than sufficient to counter-balance any decrease, which can be apprehended, from a state of their population: And Secondly, That as a Negro, when he works for himself, will do double the work which he would do, if he were working for a master, one-half of the present Slave labourers, if they were employed as Freemen, would be sufficient for the whole cultivation of all our West India Islands, in their present state.

I have, Sir, very deliberately and maturely considered the observations and conclusions of this argument; and I do not hesitate upon the whole, positively to pronounce it the most feeble and exceptionable, that, perhaps, ever passed your lips, as a Statesman and an Orator.

The slightest insinuation against the united integrity of the Legislative Assemblies belonging to the several Colonies, as conveyed in the charge of their *defending* a *bad cause*, is what nothing but the fatigues of a long Debate, and an acknowledged debility can excuse: And I am fully persuaded, that at another time, or under other circumstances, you would concur with the World in acknowledging, that more honourable men, both individually and collectively, in their Legislative capacities, do not exist: In short, that their integrity is not susceptible of a bad cause, however interesting the issue.

So far from conceiving the several Answers given by the Colonial Assemblies, as exposing *weakness*, I cannot view them in any other light, than that of candor, good sense, and liberality. They fairly confess, that there are no *positive Institutions* by which they are compelled to allow their Negro labourers, any time to labour for their own advantage and support. By acknowledging this defect, they in a manner invite the influence and provision of Legislative humanity, and tacidly avow their

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concurrence with any laws, which Parliamentary wisdom might propound for the remedy of such deficiency: And I am fully persuaded, that if a careful and well-constructed law to this effect was proposed in each of our Colonies, it would pass without any degree of serious opposition. There are men, no doubt, in all parts of the world, ready to display discernment at the expence of sound sense and policy; but, I may venture to affirm, that this law would meet with very nearly universal acceptation.

With respect to the disproportion of work done by the Colonial Slaves, for their own benefit and support, and work done for their several Masters, I admit it to be considerable: but I deny, from my own experience, as well as from universal observation, that such disproportion of labour, is the consequence of Slavery. See the Irish Peasant, after toiling for twelve hours, (that is from six to six) for the wretched hire of Four-pence; observe, for one hour, or perhaps a little more, before and after his Morning's and Evening's limitation of hired labour, with what avidity and extraordinary vigour, he improves the spot, which helps to support his wife and children. See if he will not do more in those *interested* intervals allotted by custom, than he will perform in twice the same time, when employed even in free labour for the service and hire of another. For reasons which must be obvious, I have particularly mentioned Ireland; but, I assert, the PREFERENCE to be as UNIVERSAL, as it is NATURAL, ("it is implanted in the heart of man,") and beyond the power either of allurement or oppression, to exterminate.

But, although I admit generally, the probability of this comparative statement of labour, I do by no means agree to what is laid down as a particular and positive consequence: Namely, That if Negroes were employed as free men, they would perform a constant *double quantum* of labour; and that, therefore, one half of the number now employed in the Colonies, would be sufficient for their cultivation in their present state. The exertions of a Negro, or I do contend, of a free Peasant, in those short intervals, when governed by the paramount, and powerful

ful interest of SELF, and CONSANGUINITY, are of that kind, which, by over-straining and exhausting the natural strength, forbid the possibility of continuance. Once in six days, or once or twice in each day, before and after moderate labour, a Negro or a free Peasant, urged by those great and imparative motives, *may* do twice as much as at other times, and from subordinate considerations; but, a moment's reflection will convince us, that such *constant labour* is a physical impossibility. I have, myself, observed to Peasants in my own employ, the manifest difference between the quantum of work done for me, and the quantum done for their own interests in the same given time: But this was merely to learn, if they were capable of assigning that only reason, of which I was already in possession, and which I have here stated. In some, who had more good sense and candour than others, I have not been disappointed; they have acknowledged the truth of what I here remark, and at the same time, with countenances descriptive of veracity, declared, that to work for any considerable length of time, in the manner they did for the short intervals alluded to, would be more than nature could continue to perform.

THE only fair and manifest inference which can therefore be deduced, from the several respective Answers of the Colonial Assemblies, is, that the Slaves are not, as represented by design or enthusiasm, goaded on to excessive and cruel labour; and that, by doing twice as much for themselves in short intervals, as they do for their Masters during the same periods, their constant daily labour, is not by any means, so severe and inhuman, as the tongues of slander and misrepresentation insist upon: that it is so moderate, as to allow the labourer strength, for great, temporary exertions, and that such exertions are admitted without envy or reproach.

IF, however, the Legislature of this country should be of opinion, that the labour of Colonial Slaves for their Masters, is, in any degree too constant and severe, or, the periods allotted for their own purposes too limited, and inadequate, let it, in a cool and judicious manner, insinuate its powerful influence among the Islands, to effectuate a reformation, which will, at all events,

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be no reflection either upon good sense or good meaning: But let not unfounded premises, and inconsiderate conclusions, subvert and overturn a Commerce insisted upon, by all who are intimately acquainted with its nature and advantages, and attested by the solemn protection of the law.

By an inflexible perseverance, in opposition to the unanimous sense of the Colonies; of the Merchants, and, in fact, of every man and body of men involved in the Slave Trade, the Gentlemen who call themselves Abolitionists, have induced a sensible Writer to make an allusion at once, apposite and severe.

"When the Executioners were murdering Don Carlos, the "Infant of Spain, they told him, it was all for his good." The Gentlemen, says the Writer, "who are for destroying the Plan-"ters," tell them the same.

LETTER V.

IN the Speech of the Second of April, to which these Letters, though written as general defences, most particularly apply, it is asserted, "That by the improvement of Internal Population," which must be a consequence of Abolition, "the liberty of the Negro will *advance*, or, at least, he will *approach* to a state of liberty, and become a valuable Citizen and Subject, forming a part of the same Community, and having a common interest with his superior, in the security and prosperity of the whole." Did the nature and importance of the subject fairly admit of levity? One might really convert such inferences, into sources of interesting amusement: One might indulge in the *vis comica* of marriages, births, and gradations of colours: One might draw a whimsical picture of a motley Governor and Council, a motley Assembly, and a motley Bench of Judges, arrayed in the robes and powdered perrywigs of Office. The idea of a Black

Barrister,

Barrister, moving the Court for Judgment upon a Libel against the King of Demel or Bonny, would be a matter of curious entertainment to a modern Aristophanes; and a well-finished Portrait of a huge fat Negro, leading a beautiful European Virgin to the Altar of Hymen, would, no doubt, be a banquet for the real amateurs of characature and risibility. Yet, however ludicrous these several exhibitions may appear at this moment, nothing can be more certain, than that they would, in a very few years, become the positive consequences of those advances and approaches to liberty, which are promised to the African Slaves of our several Colonies, by the Abolition of the Slave Trade: and that, if ever that act shall be confirmed, they will be rigorously insisted upon.

From a conviction, probably, that such would actually be the heterogeneous condition of the Colonies, were the Slaves really allowed the full advantage of Liberty, there yet appears in this part of the Speech alluded to, a kind of drawback, or ingenious restraint upon the liberal donations of perfect freedom. The incongruities of the event, seem, on a sudden, to crowd upon the susceptibility of reason; and, although the advantages of freedom, not only to the Slaves, but to the Planters, are dwelt upon with great stress and certainty; the former are suddenly placed in no better state, than that of *advancing or approaching to* Liberty. Lead them, however, to the right road; shew them the bright *approaches*, and they will assuredly resist every impediment, which pride or policy may then devise or offer, to prevent them from arriving at the ultimate goal to which their enlightened sense and prompted ambition was directed.

It is with freedom, as with justice, the first must be as perfect, as the latter, must be pure; and if you presume to abate or alloy the privileges or qualities of either, you destroy them altogether. Say to a Slave, or rather to the many thousand Slaves employed in the Colonies, you shall form a part of the same Community with your present Master; you shall have a common interest in the security and prosperity of the Islands; but, yet you shall not aspire to all the immunities of freedom; you shall have no share in the Representation; you shall not participate

in Municipal, Military, Legal, or Clerical honours; you shall not purchase lands in fee, you shall not inherit by descent.—When you have once altered their condition from Slavery, tell the emancipated Sons of Africa this, and they will be more indignant and more rationally offended with your limitations and distinctions, than they now are at the nominal bondage in which you keep them.

From a state of Slavery almost brutal; from worship (if it may be so called), almost infernal; from policy, savage, despotic, and inhuman, they are, if you believe the evidence given by wise and honest men, removed to a state of religious, moral, and political emendation: And, such is their degree of comparative content, that not one in one thousand would accept of freedom, were it offered, upon the condition of being sent back to their respective native countries.

Allow them, therefore, in their present condition *as Slaves*, every comfort that humanity can (with prudential reference to subordination) dictate, and you will increase their content and gratitude; but tantalize them with equivocal and partial freedom, and you will but make them dissatisfied and vindictive. To be brief, if you give them *liberty*, it must be *entire*, and you must not refuse them a participation of all its immunities. How far such a participation may be consistent with the interests, or even the virtue of the Empire, requires but a small degree of penetration to determine.

Among other reasons for the Abolition of *Slavery*, as mentioned in the same Speech of the 2d of April, it is alledged with great confidence, that the Negroes in that state, are inclinable to revolt; but, in my judgment, nothing can be more demonstrable, than that a disposition to revolt is not a consequence of Slavery. Except the nation suffers its good sense to be abused by the preposterous legend of Kidnapping, it must be *certain*, that almost the whole of our Colonial Slaves, are either persons *bred* in Africa, for the purpose of traffic, as we do inferior animals, (a custom more remote than History); persons who have lost their liberty by the perpetration of crimes, or persons sold by allotment in cases of famine. In any case, they

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are Slaves, whose condition on the Continent is admitted to be deplorable; yet, in such a deplorable condition, we hear of nothing like a spirit of revolt: at home, they are so abject in submission, that two or three Factors or Traders, are thought sufficient to guard and convey a hundred from the most interior parts of the Country to the Coasts, where they are offered to sale. How then, in the name of common sense, does it happen, that upon being removed to the Colonies, where the state of Slavery becomes so infinitely better, and where the attainment of freedom is evidently so much more difficult: How, I would ask, does it occur, that a condition so much amended, can produce such consequences, and that the Slave, who, in a state of the most abject misery, shall be apparently submissive to his lot in one place, shall revolt at his amended condition in another?

It must afford infinite satisfaction among those who are either immediately, or mediately connected with the Colonies, to reflect, that notwithstanding what is said of revolts, they very seldom happen; and, I will assert, that when they do, the motives are very opposite to those imputed: namely, an exquisite or manly sense of an imposed and unjust inferiority, and oppression. They have been known to arise from private quarrels, and sometimes, perhaps, from individual severity: but the chief cause, is, that inveterate indolence and aversion even to moderate labour, which is well known to pervade all the Nations of Africa, and which, until the Natives are gradually improved, makes industry appear oppressive. Hence it is, that they sometimes resist compulsion, and openly revolt against just and reasonable expectation.

On the part of the West Indies, it is observed, that it has been urged, "The Planters are in debt; they are already dis-"tressed; if you stop the Trade they will be ruined:" And in answer to this, a Quotation is made from Mr. Long's Work, where, speaking of the usurious terms upon which Planters often borrow money for the purchase of Slaves, you very properly observe, that he advises the laying a Duty equal to a Prohibition, on all Negroes imported *for the space of Four Years*, ex-

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cept for re-exportation: and then you state from the words of that very respectable Gentleman, the good consequences, which, arise from laying on of such a duty, *for such a limited time*. But, surely, by proposing a prohibitory duty upon the importation of Negroes *for Four Years*, Mr. LONG does not give any encouragement to a total Abolition. On the contrary, he is careful in limiting a specific period to answer transitory inconveniencies, incurred by the imprudence of rash and speculative Individuals, who were in the habits of borrowing money at too great an interest, and who, thereby, instead of relieving their distresses, increased them. No character is more respected than Mr. LONG's; no man better acquainted with the general nature of the subject, upon which he writes: and I am persuaded, that if he had thought his proposal of a *Four Years* Prohibitory Duty, would at any time become an argument for perpetual Prohibition, he would have been silent upon that point. He would not have proposed as a temporary expedient, what might ultimately contributed towards a permanent act of impolicy and ruin.

I HAVE already declared my sentiment of Mr. LONG, and therefore, shall be excused by that Gentleman, for introducing what possibly might not have occurred to him, at the time of his publishing the advice alluded to: Namely, That money borrowed in Jamaica for every other Article of Commerce and accommodation, bore the same rate of Interest, as money borrowed for the purchase of Slaves; so, at least, I am informed. The sums, very probably, were not so large, but still they bore a certain proportion to the embarrassment of the Island: besides, it is here worth observing, that borrowing of money upon such terms, is not confined to our West India Possessions. In our Eastern Colonies, we borrow money at 12 per Cent.; and yet, I believe, it will not be denied by you, Sir, or by any of your respected Co-adjutors in Office, that we FLOURISH in those PARTS.

MR. LONG says, by way of illustration, that a North American Province, by this Prohibition alone *for a few years*, (from being deeply plunged in debt) has become rich and flourishing; but,

but, even here, Mr. LONG does not appear to mean a perpetual and total Prohibition: Besides, from the difference of climate, and other circumstances affecting health, longevity, and labour, what might be productive of many advantages in North America, might be attended in the West Indies, with consequences the very reverse.

I SHALL not, Sir, occupy your time, or the attention of the Public, any longer upon this specific head; it is enough for the satisfaction of mankind, except such as are determined to shut their ear against conviction; it is enough to say, that the UNIVERSAL VOICE of the Planters at the present day, is against what is offered to them as a Legislative Nostrum of relief; and that, as they must be the best acquainted with the cause of their own embarrassment, so must they be the most competent to their remedy. I speak under the highest authority, that the voice abovementioned will not hesitate to pronounce, that a total Abolition or Prohibition, would end in total ruin.

TO ESTABLISH the doctrine, that the importation of Slaves should be discontinued on account of revolts, you state the opinion of the Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, in consequence of two insurrections of the Corromantine Negroes; but, let us see how far the opinion of the Committee went to that effect, that is, in affirmation of your prohibitory proposition. A particular description of Negroes, on a particular part of the Coast, were found by experience, to be particularly turbulent and ferocious; and the Committee reported, that the two rebellions, *like most of all others*, originated with that particular description, namely, with the Corromantines: they, therefore, proposed, " That a Bill should be brought in, for " laying a higher duty on the importation of those particular " Negroes," which, you say, was intended to operate as a general Prohibition. A Prohibition of what? Not of the Importation of Negro Slaves, but a prohibition of a particular class of Slaves, who were found particularly turbulent and dangerous; and whose labours, from the numbers that might be obtained of other nations, in other places, could be conveniently dispensed with, without prejudice or neglect of property. I would ask

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any unbiassed; nay, I will be bold to ask any candid man, if this report of the Committee of the House of Assembly goes further, than the clear and obvious meaning of its own expressions, that a higher duty should be laid upon the Importation of Corromantine Negroes, than on the Importation of any others? For this express reason, that the Corromantines were found to be, what other Negroes were not, turbulent and dangerous. I say, what other Negroes were not, because in the report alluded to, no other class of Negroes were in the least degree implicated, no more than was the danger of importing other Negroes thought of.

In fact, under a well-regulated and well-appointed Militia, together with the assistance of the army and the Police, nothing like a serious general danger is at any time to be apprehended from the importation of Negroes: and if the forces of the Islands should be any time unequal to their own security, the fault in the Government would be as unpardonable, as the consequences to the Planters might be fatal.

I should close this particular subject, Sir, with repeating what I have already endeavoured, (and I flatter myself with some success to maintain) that without the importation of Slaves, the occupations of the Planters, and the advantages derived from our West-India Commerce, are for ever gone: But I must, in addition, observe, that if that force of reasoning, that eloquence of language, that clear discriminating faculty, which in general accompany your Parliamentary Harangues, could derive any advantage from the highest eulogiums of my pen, I would be lavish in my praise of the 15th and 16th Pages of the Printed Speech, *except the last paragraph of the latter*. In your reply to Mr. Dundas, you certainly display all those brilliancies of power which mark your public character; but, as my feeble tribute would be extremely inadequate to my high admiration of your abilities, I shall proceed to the investigation and controversy of other subsequent parts of that Speech, which do not, by any means, command my approbation.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

THE observations upon the Act of 23d Geo. II. C. 31, are very far from being either judicious: The humane caution of the Legislature, to prevent enormities in the Slave Trade, is surely no evidence against the Trade itself, neither does the clause alluded to, in the least degree weaken or invalidate the usual energy and Legislative importance of the Act, which is decidedly of as much force, and as much *sanctioned* and *engaged*, as any other Act of the Legislature. The clause forbids *fraud, force, or violation* on the Coast of Africa—To what purpose? Not only to the *implied* abuse of power, and disgrace of humanity, (for we must suppose the Legislature paid some attention to that), but to prevent the *express prejudice* of the Trade. The latter is the ostensible motive, and although we must give credit to the justice and humanity of the Senate, in the introduction of that clause, a cautious and political regard to the *advantages of the Trade*, is clearly the first express meaning of the provision—For every such violation of justice; for every fraud, force, or violence committed *to the prejudice of the said Trade*, &c. every person so offending, &c. These, Sir, are the express words of the Act indeed: however, you pronounce a sincere sorrow for what you say, bears a close resemblance to the West-India Law, which inflicts a Penalty of Thirty Pounds for MURDERING a NEGRO; the price of blood (as you express yourself) in Africa, being One Hundred Pounds.

THIS, however, is a parallel, in my opinion, manifestly irregular; for although the Legislature guards against *fraud*, and *force*, and *violence*, by a clause, with a penalty of One Hundred Pounds, I am persuaded it did not, as charged, mean to make One Hundred Pounds the price of blood. Murder, at the time of passing this Act, as it now is by the common and Statute Law of England.

You have been induced, if the Printed Speech of the second of April, be a faithful representation, to make several emphatical repe-

repetitions of those most angry and harsh epithets, by which that composition is too frequently and unjustly distinguished, but which are disavowed by the almost universal and complete evidence.—Kidnapping, Murders, Frauds, Violences, Perfidies! and all such terms of horror, appears as striking in print, as they are strong in declamation; and when they are adopted by men of great abilities, in support of principles, diametrically opposite to their qualities, they affect the passions so strongly, as sometimes to enthral and captivate the understanding.

I DO not mean, Sir, to detract from the general good sense of the British House of Commons, when I declare, that during the several Debates which I have had the honour of attending to, upon this important subject, the effects of these abhorrent and high-sounding expressions upon the minds of some Gentlemen, have appeared in my judgment, exactly similar to those produced by the denunciations of such Pulpit Orators as goad, in a manner, their Congregations to Paradise, by the pains and terrors of eternal misery. Often do we behold the sympathetic contortion; often do we hear the groans of spiritual anguish! among, perhaps, two thousand auditors, when in fact, the whole discourse is nothing more than a series of irrational and sometimes blasphemous nonsense, supported by reiterations of brimstone, fire, hell, and eternal torment. With this allusion, in which as before-mentioned, I do not mean to depreciate the general good sense of the House of Commons, I shall for the present content myself, and proceed with such observations, upon the remainder of the Printed Speech, as appear in my mind, just and reasonable.

IT has been alledged, that the Slave Trade is a moral evil, which can be scrutinized, and that it has its origin with ourselves: Contemplating the state of Slavery in Africa, and comparing it with the state of Slavery in the West-Indies, nothing can be more clear, than, that instead of being a moral evil, it is a positive, religious, and moral good; and, that if it were to be Abolished, thousands of impious, sanguinary, and degraded mortals, would be effectually precluded from those religious and moral advantages, which, by a com-mixture and intercourse with enlightened nations, they in so great a comparative degree

possess.

possess. Nothing neither can be more evident, than that the Trade of Africa, whatever light it is beheld in, did not originate with us: we would, indeed, were that the case, and (supposing the evils imputed to it were real), be answerable for our share of them; but, such evils, I must repeat it, are denied by the full evidence of experience: they are visions dissolved by the breath of common sense, and local knowledge, and, represented only by enthusiasm or design, or, perhaps, now and then, by a com-mixture of both.

You, Sir, declare that you know of no evil, that ever has existed, or can imagine any greater evil can exist, than that of tearing eighty thousand persons annually from their native land: and you add, "Even, if these miserable beings were found guilty of every crime, shall *we* take upon us the *office* of their executioners?" To this Question, I answer, That if by removing Eighty Thousand beings from a state of religious and moral reprobation, which is the known state of Africa, we afford them, even, a chance of religious, and moral improvement, we thereby do them a service. If one thousand of the eighty thousand, are by that means made eligible to eternal happiness, the removal is an act of moral and religious kindness. I am not such a Jesuit, or Dominican, as to assert a right or justification of *tearing* people, even into that state of eternal happiness; yet, I do not hesitate to pronounce it, as my sincere opinion, that a small degree of force would be warrantable in converting our fellow creatures from the idolatrous worship of *dogs*, *tygers*, *blocks*, and *reptiles*, to that of the Omnipotent Divine Being. We have, however, no proof of any such force being used by our countrymen on the coast; the Slaves are brought down to a public sale, exchanged for a valuable consideration, and by means of such sale, change their masters, avoid a miserable death, or the sad alternative of being transported to another market, where the condition would be miserable, indeed.

The idea of *humiliation*, in becoming the executioners of African punishments, probably arises from a very high, yet, in my opinion, a very mistaken sense of importance and honour; the character of a Slave Merchant fairly admits, a very opposite and more liberal construction. Waving the principle, in the

consequences of their Commerce, they actually become, instead of *Executioners*, MEDIATORS; and preserve by a fortunate, at least, if not a merciful, interposition, their devoted fellow-creatures from more direful calamities. The idea of becoming Executioners, is, indeed, very far stretched; since, in fact, we only do, for the several barbarous Governments of Africa, what the Government of every civilized country should endeavour to do for itself: We make the punishment of offenders, serviceable to the State; and this we do not in the character of Executioners; but, in that of fair traders, bartering with them articles of value and convenience, and taking in return that labour, which is of so much value and convenience to ourselves; and, without which, the produce and improvement of our Colonial Property, must, as I have before asserted, be entirely distroyed.

I SHOULD be glad to know, Sir, in what character did the Colonists of America (while that country was in our possession) conceive themselves to act, when they purchased, for so many years, the transported convicts of this and the Sister Island. When by concurring with the clemency of the Sovereign, they made *purchased labour* the redemption of *capital punishment*. It cannot surely be supposed, that the degraded idea of executioners ever entered their imaginations, or ever damped the pleasures which they enjoyed, in observing the thriving progressions of their industry.

IT is said, the Africans are made Slaves of, for trifling offences, and sometimes for no offences. Unacquainted as we are with the laws of interior Africa, (from whence the Slaves are sent to the Coast,) it is impossible to form any certain idea of their principles. But we need not, surely, resort to obscure and remote jurisprudence, for inadequate, legal, institutions; or, for offences more trifling in their nature, than many for which we doom our immediate countrymen, and fellow subjects, to perpetual Slavery: for which, we consign them, in great multitudes, every year, to eternal separation from freedom, friends, and country; a separation made more highly exquisite by a natural degree of reflection, upon that real liberty, and those real advantages, from which they are precluded.

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The Advocates for a continuation of the Slave Trade, say, that by the intercourses of that Trade, the Inhabitants on the Coast have been in some degree improved and civilized, and that they have gained some knowledge in the principles of distributive justice; but, trifling as this moral advantage is, it is opposed, by a charge of atrocity, not supported, even by presumptive evidence. There is neither positive nor circumstantial proof, that we do initiate them in the study of mutual destruction, and give them, merely, enough of the form of justice, to enable them to add the pretext of legal trial, to the other modes of perpetrating atrocious inequity. In all that I have read, or heard, upon the Question of Slavery, these premeditated, and systematic enormities, have not been supported by any degree of just authority: and, I am not less surprized, at hearing them deliberately imputed, than I am at hearing the practice of human sacrifice, confirmed as it is by undeniable evidence, called *loose insinuation*.

The charge of putting British arms into the hands of the Africans, promoting, thereby, universal war and dessolation; and the affair of the river Cameroon, are the next progressive objects, which, for the honour of human nature, and the interest of truth, should be explained and commented on. It is not at all, improbable, Sir, but by this time, the malicious misrepresentations of the latter, may be obvious to your understanding, without the assistance of my pen; but, with the Public in general, the disgust occasioned by such falsehood and malice, still remains; they should, therefore, be made acquainted with the truth, which is as follows:—

Some British Ships being in the River Cameroon, for the purchase of Slaves, had contracted with the King, or Chief of the Country, for a certain number at a specific price; agreeably to this contract, a part of the stipulated number were delivered and paid for. But some French Traders, happening to arrive in the River, the Chief totally regardless of his contract, immediately raised his price, and refused to deliver to the English Captains any more but on terms equal to his avarice; to this the English-

men objected, and prepared to leave the River with incomplete cargoes.

In order to clean and make the vessels convenient and healthy, for those Slaves which had been obtained, one of the Captains ordered all his stores to be landed, when the Chief, who before had violated his solemn engagement, conceiving, that by a detention of such stores, he might enforce a compliance with his extortion, actually had them seized. The Captain finding this to be the case, and knowing of course, that he could not proceed upon his voyage to the West Indies without provisions; and knowing, also, the non-effect of either representation or remonstrance, there, or in any other place, came to a resolution of adopting the only alternative which reason could suggest. He charged his guns, and, in order to obtain justice, fired a few shots over the town, one of which entering a store-house, staved a cask of rum or brandy contained therein. This lucky expedient, had more than the full and intended effect; for, the terrified Despot, not only returned the stores, but to prevent further mischief, consented to perform the just obligations of his contract. Notwithstanding all the dreadful things that has been said of the business in Cameroon River, this Sir, and I mention it with infinite satisfaction, for the honour of my Countrymen and Country, is the whole truth of the transaction.

It is certainly a fact, which I will not attempt a refutation of, that part of the several Manufactures which we barter in Africa, consist of Arms and Ammunition; neither will I deny, that the Natives make use of such articles in the manner alledged in the Printed Speech, namely, to fight their battles: But, let us see by fair comparison, how far those battles are thereby rendered more fierce and sanguinary: alas! such is the invention; such are the resources of ambition, of rage, of resentment, and of revenge; such the thirst for power; such the appetite for dominion, that MAN in his most UNTUTORED and BARBAROUS CONDITION, is never at a loss for the means of gratificatton: And, certain it is, beyond the power of argument, that the battles of former ages, before the discovery and invention of gunpowder, and those engines of hostility which are now in use took

took place, were more fierce, the slaughters more extensive, and the rage more personal and vindictive, than at the present period. The fact was proved upon the Plains of Cannae, and often upon those of this Kingdom.

LETTER VII.

IN the course of these several Letters, I have endeavoured to Answer progressively, the various Observations and Inferences, in the Printed Speech of the Second of April; but, among other objections discoverable in that Speech, I find it to be nearly as irregular in its series, (comparing it with the systematic order of your usual compositions) as it is unsupported in its tendency, opposing it with the body of written and parole Evidence, which it is meant to combat. The chain is sometimes entirely broken, and sometimes distorted by links, that appear to be the workmanship of an inferior Artist. Hence, when I conceive, that I have entirely done with certain specific charges, and felicitate myself upon the idea of complete and final victories; I meet, as it were, the enemy at unexpected posts, and am a second and a third time assaulted by similar vollies of calumny and condemnation: My judgment, indeed, suggests, that I may decline such reiterated attacks, but my spirit still ptompts me to resistance.

FOR the future, however, I shall pass over those severe and abominable epithets, with which the Slave Commerce is so often branded, and confine my Observations and Arguments, to objects of more intrinsic and material consequence.

Were the Commerce of the Human Species of that iniquitous nature, which is imputed to it, I should agree with you, that the want of universal concurrence in other nations, ought not, for a single moment, to prevent the Legislature of this great and liberal Country, from the exercise of its wonted Humanity: the enormities complained of, if existing, should be extinguished without the delay of universal co-operation. Expediency, is not, in my opinion, any plea for oppression or injustice: but, as I have already supported my opinions, by the Evidence of Divine and Moral Authority, you will not now be surprized to hear me repeat an absolute denial of both; and, add, that even the unanimous concurrence of every other nation in Europe, should not induce us to a measure, in its principles and consequences, so directly opposite to what it professes.

It is said, that by waiting for the concurrence of other nations, we furnish them with arguments for the continuation of this Commerce: That they will say, "Why should we abolish, "when Great Britain has not abolished: Britain free as she is! "Just and honourable as she is! and deeply also involved as "she is in this Commerce, above all other nations, not only "has not Abolished, but has refused to Abolish; she has deli- "liberated; she sanctions it; at least, for a while, she sanctions "it: Her Legislature, therefore, it is plain, sees no guilt in it; "and thus has furnished us with the strongest evidence of the "justice unquestionably, and of the policy also in a certain mea- "sure, and in certain cases, at least, of permitting this Traffic "to continue." And from the supposition of such arguments, you infer, that we shall henceforth have to answer for their crimes as well as our own.

Supposing the Trade to be as you alledge, Criminal; and supposing, the influence of British example to be, altogether, so universal and important, as you seem to imagine it, the consequence of such criminal responsibility, would indeed, be serious; and, we have, God knows, crimes enough of our own to answer for: But, this imputed criminality, as before observed, is refuted by incontrovertible authorities; and as to the influence of our example, in matters of political, moral, or religious speculation,

culation, it would not be difficult to prove it merely a vision, created by, and confined to our own imaginations.

THE influence of British Power, under the wisdom of our Constitution and Government, I admit to be great and extensive: but, the opinion and expedients of British Projectors, for the improvement and order of Society, are just as little attended to in Foreign Nations, and by Foreign Governments, as the opinions and expedients of Foreign Countries, are in these kingdoms. National vanity is a natural, and in some degree, a necessary prejudice: but I am persuaded, there is not a country in Europe, that does not think its importance in matters of policy, morality, and religion, as exemplary, and as worthy of imitation, as that of Great Britain; or, if a Question of supposed enormity was in public discussion, that would not assume the consequence of saying and thinking, that by pre-eminent example, they would become answerable for our crimes: Depend upon it, that, whatever may be the universal impressions of our Fleets and our Armies, neither our wisdom, nor our liberality, are so much thought of, as we may imagine.

I READILY admit, that our share of the Slave Commerce, is at present (that is, since the misfortunes of a neighbouring kingdom) greater; and, that, as you say, we are deeper in it, than any other nation: But, I contend, at the same time, that such disproportion bears no more than a moderate ratio to that general superiority of Commerce, which we maintain over every other nation of the known world. In short, the several Countries to which you allude, have ears and eyes, and senses of their own; they have the faculties of thinking, investigating, judging, and deciding as we have, and, they will not allow us the privilege of usurping their defects or their offences: They will assert their own responsibility, and, perhaps, by way of mortifying our vanity, (those among them, at least, who by travel and reading, are intimate with our local imperfections) refer us to the acknowledged inequality and injustice of our Civil Code of Jurisprudence. To the thousands of our unhappy fellow-subjects, who, under such inequality and injustice, are suffering SECLUDED CAPTIVITY! PERPETUAL SLAVERY! hunger! cold! and every personal and relative

relative calamity: Suffering for what? Not for murder, thefts, adultery, rebellion, and other acts of turpitude, but, alas! and with horror be it spoken, for MISFORTUNE only; for storm; for shipwreck; for credulity; for friendship and liberal confidence, returned by deception and dishonesty: they will, perhaps, direct the divine solicitudes of mercy; the eyes of a Gracious and beloved Sovereign, the acknowledged wisdom of his Ministers, and the zeal and charity of the Legislature, to the horrors of Insolvency and Imprisonment——

"TO THE PALE TERRORS OF A GLOOMY JAIL!"

THEY will recommend to our Philanthropy, such objects as have the greatest claims upon our feelings; and wonder, that before we transmit a spurious commiseration, to countries that do not require it, our real compassion is not applied to calamities which demand it.

FOR my own part, I disdain the wandering, vagrant kind of humanity, which neglects or shuns the insuperable miseries that surround it; and of which, it has visible, and auricular demonstration, for the uncertain, and obscure, oppressions of distant regions, which cannot be ascertained, either by just representation or review: and I hold it to be the natural and indispensible duty of every true patriot, especially of every liberal-minded ENGLISH FREEMAN, before he attempts the cure of radical foreign evils, to endeavour zealously, at the reformation of remediable domestic calamities. Shame upon that inconsistant sensibility, which can listen to the Judges of the land in their Official capacities, acknowledging the cruelty and imbecility of the existing local laws, and at the same time zealously tranfer, their compassion from their fellow-citizens, and subjects, literally perishing under such laws: Benevolence, should, I confess, be universal; but its first consideration should be, DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

IT must not be understood, Sir, that in pointing out this preferable, and indispensible, duty, I mean to admit, that the Slave Commerce, except, in respect to wise and humane regulations, an object of that universal benevolence. On the contrary, I must again repeat what I have already so often alledged, and ascer-

ascertained by proof, that such Commerce was just, and merciful, as it is political, and advantageous.

THERE is one misfortune attending the Question of the Slave Trade, which it is highly necessary I should remove: Either from want of discrimination, or due reflection, the regulated system of the Commerce, is too frequently blended with, or, mistaken for, the immemorial system of Slavery itself; and the former, which, with all its consequences, must be considered as an actual blessing, involved in the condemnation of the latter, which we cannot but contemplate as an apparent misfortnne. The difference, however, is so manifest as not to demand explanation, except to those who do not reflect, and to those who have not that faculty.

IN whatever shape we can possibly view the system of Slavery, in the Abstract, even when we find it attested by the Divine admission from the Creation of the World, to the present moment, and recognized by express provisions, promises, and regulations, still we can possibly behold it in no other light but that of an APPARENT EVIL; the cause of which being far beyond the extent of human perception, must, as it ever has done, remain enveloped in profound obscurity.

AFTER the attestations and recognitions already mentioned, to call it more than an apparent evil, would, in my opinion, be highly presumptuous; would be to arraign the wisdom and the justice of Omnipotence itself. But, the COMMERCE OF THE HUMAN SPECIES, with all its moral and religious improvements, when pursued by enlightened nations, and under humane and liberal ordinances, is a system of which there can be no doubt; which we may boldly, and without hesitation, call, what we know it to be, not an APPARENT, but a POSITIVE GOOD.

THE emendation of human nature in every part of the Universe, by the introduction of civilization, and of mental and moral improvement, is, I acknowledge, a duty indispensible among mankind; and although it has pleased Divine Providence to admit of Slavery from the earliest period, I am persuaded that nothing would be more pleasing to the Divine will, than the improvement of that state, by every possible means.

There are, however, many parts of the world which are proved by the most direct and substantial evidence of trial, to be by nature, so far as we may judge from facts and circumstances, totally repulsive to the examples and precepts of social intercourse. The Africans, at the Cape of Good Hope, and all the countries of that Peninsula; the natives of Borneo, and in many parts of Sumatra, and not less the inhabitants of those parts from whence we obtain our Colonial labourers. In the latter, added to the brutal barbarism of disposition and manners, the very climate renders the attempt preposterous; for, if by any wonderful means, a civilized stranger escapes the one, he is almost sure to fall a victim to the other.

The impossibility of improvement in the way of social intercourse, has been fully evinced in a variety of melancholy instances, but in none more decisively than in the two attempts that have been made to establish a social, and at the same time, a profitable Intercourse and Settlement at Sierra Leone. In the first, out of Six Hundred Adventurers, little more than fifty escaped the ferocity of the Natives, and the fury (for so it may truly be called) of the Climate. Those unhappy Survivors, after the Settlement had been exterminated, were picked up upon remote parts of the Coast, and several of them are yet alive to testify the truth of my assertion.

I do not assume to say, from positive knowledge, what may be the situation of the recent Settlers in this part of the Continent; but, I am credibly informed, that mortality and plunder have reduced them to a deplorable state. In short, the same divine inscrutable dispensation which has from the beginning of our knowledge of time, admitted the existence of Slavery, and attested the Commerce of the Human Species, seems to have thrown an invulnerable and eternal bar against every attempt of social improvement in those parts.

LETTER VIII.

HAVING stated as many arguments, and adduced as many facts, in support of the Slave Commerce, as, in my opinion, and I flatter myself, in the opinion of every cool, dispassionate, and unprejudiced individual, are fully sufficient, under wise and humane regulations, to justify its moral, its religious, and its political principles: It now becomes necessary, that I should pay more particular attention to that part of the Speech of April 2, which proposes a PROGRESSIVE change from barbarism to civilization, in the immense Continent of Africa; a change from dark and brutal ignorance, to all those various emanations of refined philosophy which unite to constitute, even the pre-eminent felicity of this free and flourishing Empire; all which it is positively asserted, may be effected by means of a mutual and social intercourse with the several countries of Europe, nay, would be the certain consequence of an Abolition.

IT is a proposition, which I believe will not be denied, that great and expansive minds, such as you are universally admitted to possess, are sometimes apt to out-stretch in theory, the rational boundaries of experiment: The imagination, warmed, and, perhaps, too fully saturated with the principles of virtue, often becomes enthusiastic, and the issues of its zeal, sometimes, extravagant and impracticable.

THIS, too generous fervor, which is to be excused, perhaps, admired for its heroism, is, however, often productive of much inconvenience in society; especially, in the formation of laws, by which nations are to be governed and directed. It should therefore be restrained by reflection, and, by a cool and judicious reference to example, proving to demonstration the positive consequences of premature adoption. If it appeared to me practicable, by means of social intercourse, to reform, or civilize, the inveterate barbarism of Africa, (I mean those parts involved in the Question of the Slave Trade) much more,

if I conceived that a discontinuance of that Trade would produce a consequence so grateful to humanity, I should think myself unworthy of the liberty and happiness of improved Society, were I to say a single word in opposition to a generous attempt at either: Nay, I should consider myself equally unworthy, if, as a member of such improved Society, if I did not exert my best faculties in promoting and disseminating the blessings thereof, not merely by the adoption, and dereliction herein mentioned, but, by means of every rational expedient which my judgment could dictate, or my industry discover.

The fact, in the present instance, however, is, that the idea of improving to civilization the Countries alluded to, seems condemned in its very conception. If we believe those who have lived in the country, and who have risked a rational degree of intercourse; if we attend to the fate of those who have attempted something more; in short, if we take experience and example for the rules of our judgment, the purpose must be destroyed, even in its first dawn. In the parts alluded to, the seeds of human corruption appear to be so deeply rooted, as to terrify the most zealous and adventurous Philanthropist from any social attempt at improvement. Upon the unexceptionable, positive evidence of living worth and veracity, how often does it appear, that attempts have been made to dissuade the Kings and Chiefs of Africa from human sacrifices, from horrible murders, from bloody appendages of grandeur, from ceremonies sanguinary, and from idolatries impious and irrational. How often have the European Residents of that country endeavoured by advice, by argument, by threats, and by express abhorrence to evince the iniquity and degradation of such practices? With what success the living testimony of that respectable body of evidence abovementioned, will best inform you *,

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* In addition to the Evidence here alluded to, it is a known fact, that when every dissuasive means has proved ineffectual, the guns of the Fort at Cape Coast and other English Settlements on the Coast, have been turned towards the Black Towns to prevent human sacrifices; and that even the fear of destruction did not operate as a preventive. The late Governor Roberts, when Resident at Cape Coast Castle, made several humane attempts at reforming this practice at

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THE Nations of Europe, Sir, are charged with having given those of Africa enough of their intercourse, to initiate them in the study of mutual destruction: "We give them enough," it is said, "of the forms of justice, to enable them to add the pretext "of legal trials to their other modes, of perpetrating the most a-"trocious iniquity." I conceive it to be of very little consequence what sort of form, whether loose or systematic atrocious iniquity is perpetrated; but I am persuaded, that even *the very Forms of Justice* are powerful preventives to atrocity, and must certainly produce in the minds of the most hardened in barbarism, some degree of compunction.

SHOULD, therefore, the intercourse of Commerce advance no further in the great system of civilization, that alone might be considered as important.

BUT, as I have observed in a former Letter, there is no shadow of positive or presumptive Evidence to prove, that the enlightened Nations of Europe give to the savage tribes of Africa, any examples of such inhuman artifices. I speak of general proceedings, and I add, that any individual who should from interested, or other motives, with a villainous design, apply that, or any other means of enslaving his fellow-creatures, already in the possession and enjoyment of liberty, should be worried like a monster from society.

THE truth is, and that too, beyond the power of contradiction, that when the offer of European Commerce, was first made, and became known in Africa, where the system of Slavery was as completely established, as it is at this day, the Natives more contiguous to the Coast, instead of sending their Captives to the

the burials of Chiefs and great men: and at last, upon one occasion, finding every rational argument fail, sent an armed force to prevent it, and threatened to destroy the Town and Plantations in case the Natives persisted in so shocking a ceremony. By this benevolent interposition, Governor ROBERTS actually saved the lives of several men and women who had been prepared for immolation: The English having, however, left the Town before the funeral ceremony was compleated, it was afterwards found, that just as the grave was closing, the relations of the deceased seized a fine youth of about fourteen years of age, and having in an instant knocked his brains out, threw him upon the body of the Chief.

Eastern

Eastern boundaries as usual, transported them Westwards, and disposed of them in barter for such articles as they had occasion for *. Even in the origin of the Commerce, the European Traders found no difficulty in supporting it; for the source, even at that remote period, was in proportion to the demand, altogether as prolific as at this day. It must not be here understood, that by an increase of European demand for Slaves, the system of Slavery itself was extended; I mean only, that the notoriety of the demand naturally extending with the increase thereof, the Trade as before-mentioned, was diverted from its first markets. The superior quality of European Manufactures, as well as the preferable convenience of European Markets may, nay, indeed, must, have considerably affected the Trade on the Eastern confines: But, the spirit of the system was in the beginning, according to every authentic and judicious Historian, as prevalent and universal as it is at the present moment. Those inhuman artifices, therefore, imputed to the several Nations of Europe, are manifestly unfounded.

In the Speech of the Second of April, after enumerating several of the causes for which the Natives of Africa are said to be condemned to Slavery, (avoiding any recitation of the higher crimes,) It is asked, "Are these then the legitimate sources of "Slavery? And shall we pretend, that we can thus acquire an "honest right to exact the labour of these people?"

Nothing, in my opinion, is much more indefinite, than the legitimacy of laws and customs, as they vary, contradict, and condemn each other in the different nations of the world, and even in the minds of men living even in the same communities, and governed by the same authoritative forms. For example: It is in my opinion, much more abominable in the eyes of God, and of his rational Creatures, to condemn a man to a tormenting, lingering death, for not believing implicitly in the doctrine of transubstantiation, or in the miserable legends of Relics, than it is to sell a man who has voluntarily, *according to the Laws of his Country*, lost his freedom, by staking it at a Gambling-table:

* The Evidence of Messrs. Barnes and Weaves, is pointed in this respect.

Yet,

Yet, in the judgment of some nations, and those too, which boast of superior understanding, exalted benevolence, and elevated honor, the legitimacy of the former is asserted with as much moral and religious solemnity and zeal, as the illegitimacy of the latter is insisted upon in the opinion of others.

SUPPOSE, in the two first cases, the religious judgments of a Spanish or Portuguese Inquisition, should be less rigorous; and the sentence, instead of death, should be Slavery, either at home or in foreign parts; would any man feel compunction or remorse of conscience, in purchasing labour, thus made *inevitable* and *perpetual*, especially if that labour was found, and proved to be the only means by which he could maintain and improve his property.

ALLOW me, Sir, to go a little further: Supposing the sentence of the *Holy* and *Inspired Fathers* to be eventual, that such *impious Unbelievers* should be offered to public sale as Slaves; but, that if no Purchasers could be found for them, then, that they should immediately be burnt alive, for the *honor* and *glory* of the Christian Faith; would any humane or rational being, in such a case, hesitate to snatch them from the devouring flames, by the purchase of their labour, merely because that labour was in future to release the given consideration? I believe, I am secure in saying, that not one of the miserable victims of religious phrenzy, that ever expired under the torments of an *auto de fe*, but would have gladly consented to a commutation and condition so preferable. I do not mean, Sir, to justify or qualify the practice of one unprincipled and irrational law, by the customary exercise of another: my intention is only, to prove, first, That from the universal infirmity of human intellect, weak, absurd, merciless, and, in short, ILLEGITIMATE laws and customs, are to be universally met with: And, secondly, That titles, derived from such laws and customs, may be legitimated by reason and humanity.

THE devotion of a religious African, for the beard of a Quadrupede, or the Blocks of his own workmanship, is altogether as zealous, as that of the Holy Fathers above-mentioned for the

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bone of a reputed Saint, or the blood of a religious Martyr: And it is not all impossible, (many of the primary causes of Slavery, still remaining profoundly obscure) but numbers of those beings that are sold upon the different boundaries of Africa, may be condemned for heresy and profanation, as the more deplorable convicts of Spain and Portugal are for similar offences.

Upon the whole, the obvious case, is thus: Individuals of different Nations, strangers to each other, and even to the language and customs of each other, are reduced, by some means, to captivity, and sent from the interior parts of Africa, to whatever Market may be most convenient, and thought most profitable. Their condemnation is already sealed, their state inevitable: they are there offered to the best bidders, and should their Masters, and absolute Owners, be disappointed in the Market, the alternative is, either death, or a more infinitely rigorous and deplorable existence, without any of those great, moral, and religious advantages, which many of them, at least, of those disposed off to European Purchasers, obtain by the transfer: This, Sir, is a statement as fair as it is concise, and is, in fact, all we can speak of with any degree of moral certainty.

I am well aware, it will be here objected, by the enemies of this Commerce; that many of the Slaves imported into our Colonies, are suffered to remain in ignorance of those moral and religious duties, by which their situations would be so essentially amended. I believe, Sir, this charge, like many others, is greatly exaggerated; but take it as it is reported, it is still remediable, and, as such, cannot in the smallest degree, operate against the principles of the Commerce. Let compulsatory laws be adopted for their improvement in those great concerns; let the Magistracy of our Colonies, and their subordinates be active; let Penalties be judiciously assessed, and rigorously exacted; but, above all, let the Church Establishment be complete, and let the Ministry be diligent: These great sources of improvement, which might with little difficulty be effected, and which would, in a very short interval, entirely obviate that formidable objection, would make universal those advantages, and render the

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whole body of Colonial Slaves as happy, and as highly improved, as they are in general.

The 21st Page of the Printed Speech, displays a splendid climax of that oratory, which is generally applied with success to the passions, and which, I make no doubt, with the well-known concomitant ornaments of your manner and delivery, even after the fatigues of a night's debate, and at the exhausted hour of three in the Morning, made a sensible impression upon the philanthrophy of your auditors The energies of calamity are strong persuasives, and recommended by your powers, could scarcely fail of subduing the cooler considerations and distinctions of reflection. God forbid! that I should attempt to detract from the real merits of my fellow-creatures, on the Continent of Africa, or defraud them, in the least degree, of whatever qualities they may possess: but, if a general inference may be drawn from some particular instances, (and we cannot through the dark invelopement of the Country discover more,) the idea of that social system of exquisite affections, which you describe to be torn and violated, must in a great degree vanish. The universal custom of compelling the female sex, wives, daughters, sisters, and others, to the severity of field-labour, and all the drudgery of life in that burning climate, is, by no means an evidence of tender affections, delicacy, or decency. The pawning of children, or perhaps, more properly speaking, the delivering of them as hostages to foreigners, as well as to each other, and very frequently neglecting to redeem them, is, in my opinion, a striking instance both of gross depravity, and relative insensibility; and the manner in which they treat their Slaves, whether of breed, or purchase, cannot, by any means, be favourable to the idea of social intercourse. I will, however, admit, that there may be, nay, that there have been, and will be instances of cruel and melancholy separation; but they appear to me, a inevitable to the condition of Slavery, and not in the least degree the consequence of the Slave Commerce: and fully persuaded I am, that if all Europe was to unite in relinquishing that Commerce, the same, or more afflicting separations, would take place in other quarters.

LETTER IX.

IT is eloquently and strongly observed, by a celebrated Writer of North Britain, that in judging upon Evidence, a matter of such infinite importance to the Constitution and Jurisprudence of every well-regulated State, there are certain rules established, which, in every Court and every Country, are received as most invaluable guides, &c. This judicious and incontrovertible remark, was made upon a Question, which, though of an individual nature, yet applies unquestionably to the investigation of truth, in all cases of Legislative or Judicial inquiry.

AMONG such certain and established rules of Evidence, it will not, I believe, be denied, that preponderation in substance, and majority of numbers, are invariably admitted to be decisive. I am persuaded, that to direct your attention to the body of Evidence delivered to the Legislature, upon the Question of Improving the prodigious Continent of Africa, from gross barbarism, to polished civilization, by means of social intercourse, would be useless. Your memory, is, in that respect, as in every other, of national consequence, accurate and tenacious: but to the Public, who are so materially interested in the issue, and who have neither equal powers, nor equal opportunity, it is material to my purpose, to refer them for particulars to the several Reports, as given before the Committees of the Privy Council, and the House of Commons *.

THE very great respect, and admiration, with which I have, in common with the rest of the world, always contemplated your talents, cannot, however, restrain me from expressing my astonishment at the comparison which you endeavoured

* For a very judicious arrangement of this vast Body of Evidence, the Reader is referred to "Observations on the Evidence given before the Committee of "the Committees of the Privy Council, and the House of Commons, in two "Parts," Published by STOCKDALE.

to draw, between the situation of this Island, at its remotest and most barbarous period, and the situation of Africa at this moment. In the one, the temperature and salubrity of the climate was ever, as now, encouraging to industry; in the other, the fervid heat, the fetid inundations, and the pestilential fumes, were always, as now, repulsive to exertion. In the first, the language, though differing in some parts, was in general understood every where; the customs, except in some immaterial instances, the same; the laws, from what we may observe at the present day, notwithstanding conquests and revolutions, always in some degree rational; and the religion, though infected by a tincture of idolatry, yet not altogether grossly pagan. The country of Great Britain, in its remotest periods, was intimately known to its inhabitants, and in a short time so, even to its various conquerors: When the Romans, that great, refined, and superior race of men, first arrived on the Coast, they saw a people comparatively rude and unaccommodated; they apprehended no resistance, but they were fatally mistaken: they were opposed by systematic warriors, in chariots, with appendages of slaughter! by swarms of equestrian heroes, under the regular command of gallant leaders; and, such was the warlike ardor of their determined spirits, that assailing the proud and well-appointed enemy, even before they reached the shore, they dyed the ocean with their blood.

The superior military skill of the Roman legions, at length, however, prevailed; and the brave Islanders were reduced to their absolute controul for more than Three Hundred Years. It was during that period of conquest, that the regular civilization of this Country may be said to have commenced; and from thence it has gradually improved to its present state of pre-eminence. But this improvement cannot be imputed to social intercourse: The subjugation of Rome was so little better than abject Slavery to the several Nations, against which she sent her conquering Eagles, that even the Princes of the Earth were regarded by this Mistress of the World, as *mancipia, quasi manu capti*; and, however unjustifiable the principle, were conceived to have lost not only their freedom, but, if it pleased the victors, their lives also, by the right of conquest.

WHATEVER might have been the consequences of internal commotions to prisoners taken in war, or, the punishments internally applied to convicted Criminals; in short, whatever system of Slavery might have existence in this country, before the Roman invasion, certain it is, that the external Commerce of the Human Species was unknown until that period. Those whom the Sovereignty of the Conquerors pleased, were permitted to remain in the country they had conquered; but those whom the same authority thought fit, were transported as Slaves, for the service, and to augment the luxury of the Commonwealth.

IT was not, therefore, as HENRY, in his History of Great Britain states, *an established article of our exports*, for except under the controul, and perhaps in some few instances, from the example of the Romans, with whom the practice was universal, it was not known in this country. In fact, it appears from History, that in the times of our most uncivilized condition, we were not in the habit of transporting Slaves to other countries, and that the Romans, to whom we are indebted for civilization, by conquest, were our sole preceptors in the Commerce of our fellow creatures: indeed, from our total ignorance of Navigation, even such as the times were then competent to, the Commerce from Britain, must have been impossible.

THE charming quotations of poetic fancy, which, to enrich the prospect of African civilization, and freedom, are introduced in the latter part of the printed Speech, captivate the senses; they lead the impassioned and generous, though inexperienced mind, to an anticipation, and participation, of those delightful scenes, hose exquisite enjoyments, so brilliantly and sublimely delineated: but, alas! the Geographer, the Naturalist, and the man of local experience and reflection, who know and can judge of the country which you would fain recommend to the improving benevolence of social intercourse, as a fit and practicable region for, and susceptible of, such blessings, must see at one view, the impossibility of the endeavour. We, indeed, in this temperate and happy climate, may with delight and adoration, and without the dread of insufferable day, behold the panting STEEDS of AURORA, and see nocturnal

turnal clouds scattered by the impetuosity of their breathing! We may enjoy the delights of EVENING, mingle with its ZEPHYRS, and view its chrystal dews without the apprehension of contaminated exhalations. We may go down to the cheerful vale! to the gay dance! the rural pastimes! and all the ineffable delights of friendship, and soft affiliation; but the wretched sons and daughters of Africa, are precluded by nature from those peculiar blessings. They parch under the unremitting fervor of a burning sun, and they breath (at least four months in the year) amidst a putrid vapour, which is inimical to life. These are dangerous facts, which, however humane the idea of social intercourse for the purpose of civilization may be, should make men, extremely cautious how they encounter them: But if, notwithstanding all those positive impediments, proved, as I have already stated, by a respectable preponderation of evidence, the philanthropy of the legislature should induce it to make still further experiments, let not such philanthropy extend to the Abolition of a Trade, which, without injury to experiments, may be supported with humanity and national advantage.

LETTER X.

WHEN I first assumed the freedom of addressing you upon this great National Subject, it had already been powerfully and very fully debated by the most sensible and ingenious Members of the Legislature; it had been elaborately investigated by the different Committees of the Privy Council, and the House of Commons; and certain very learned and judicious writers had made it the favourite thesis of their respective abilities. The whole of the several Parliamentary arguments, the great body of evidence given to the Committees, and the various written

written disquisitions, together with the opinions and inferences thereon, appeared, in my judgment, altogether too vast and complicated for general public service: I conceived, and I apprehended with reason, that a great majority of the Trading and Commercial Communities; Communities so important and respectable in themselves, and so highly interested in the issue of the question, could not find sufficient leisure to peruse, and digest with due deliberation, an aggregate so very voluminous; and I had for some time entertained serious thoughts of epitomizing the essential parts of the whole in separate brief Essays, which, together with my own observations thereon, and my independant sentiments, might accommodate such intervals of time as could be spared from more immediate local avocation.

From the same motives, and with the same views, I had determined to make choice of a medium, which being published upon days of relaxation from business, could not fail of applying to opportunity and convenience: But, while I was contemplating an arrangement of this necessary object, the Printed Speech, so frequently mentioned, was delivered to me in the manner already described; I read it with due attention, and it appearing to be a summary of all the material charges against the Commerce of the Human Species, as well as of the several advantages to be expected from an abolition thereof, I determined to make it the specific basis of my endeavours. By epitomizing the essential parts of the whole, I mean the whole of such charges, and the evidence given before the Committees upon the truth or validity thereof; and, I do most solemnly aver, that should any observations in these Letters appear similar to those of other Writers, they are yet as to me perfectly original *.

Mr. Clarkson's publications, and almost every other *against* the Slave Trade, I have perused with all necessary attention, but, for the purpose of exercising my own free sentiment, I have as carefully avoided the comments and opinions of those

* Except the scripturial references for which I am indebted to an anonymous Correspondent, who, approving very highly of several Essays that had previously appeared in the Observer, sent those references as attestations of his concurrence.

authors,

authors, who have written in its defence; thus, whatever, in your excellent and superior judgment, may appear erroneous or faulty therein, must be entirely imputed to my own inability. I may dread, indeed, the strictures of criticism, but I feel a pleasure in reflecting, that I cannot be classed among those whom SENECA compares to petty Artists, that employ themselves in copying the works of others; nor, implicated in the reproach of HORACE, when he exclaims—

O! Imitatores servum pecus

BEFORE I close my Epistolary Correspondence, allow me, Sir, to express a sincere hope, that whatever I have written in favour of the SLAVE TRADE, and its continuance, may be construed agreeably to its true intent and meaning, and that I may not be suspected, as a public, or private, advocate, for any system not founded in, and supported by Justice: the system of SLAVERY, such as it is, in its best condition, my humanity prompts me to lament, although, at the same time, my judgment pronounces it to be rooted, and I am much afraid, incurable. But, the SLAVE COMMERCE I hold in a very different point of view, and both my policy and my commisseration, recommend it not only as the great and only support of our West India Possessions, but as the only rational means by which the original condition can be in any way amended.

THE three original rights of Slavery assigned by JUSTINIAN and other Civilians, are, I admit with Sir WILLIAM BLACKSTON, and other great authorities, all of them built upon false foundations; where it arises *jure genitum* by captivity in war, where it is said to begin *jure civili*, when one man sells himself to another; and lastly, when the children of Slaves acquired by either means, are *jure naturæ* by a negative kind of birth-right reduced to that condition, these *titles* to Slavery are, without doubt, all *bad*; but the last appears to be by far the most unjustifiable.

THIS concurrence in opinion with regard to the three original rights of Slavery, does not however in any way extend to the condemnation of a fourth right, which, though unnoticed by the above authorities, I am persuaded, is anterior to the other three,

three, and not less justifiable than original; namely, the right of natural and judicial atonement: a right which, perhaps if adopted even in this Country, might not only preserve and increase the treasures of population and labour, but save us from the disgrace of frequent and inadequate executions which astonish, and disgust the surrounding Nations.

Upon the principles of Justinian, the Law of England very properly "abhors, and will not endure Slavery," but this abhorrence is not confined to England alone; upon the same principles, every enlightened Country in Europe hold it equally odious —they do not enslave Captives, neither do they purchase the freedom of each other; but when men, for atrocious offences against the Laws of Nature or Society, forfeit their right of natural and judicial equality and protection, they do not hesitate, instead of punishing them by an unwarrantable privation of existence, to deprive them of that which is perhaps, in improved Society, nearly as invaluable. So refined, so fastidious are our ideas of freedom, that although we can behold with composure, thousands of our free born fellow subjects bound and strangled every year with *cords*, we can scarcely *endure* the sight of a single individual working under the security of a *chain*, although by such work his punishment becomes retributive.

From the most effectual researches, from the most rational conclusions, we must believe, that the great majority of Slaves sold in Africa, upon the Coast, and at the distant inland boundaries of that barbarous Continent, are made so for crimes committed against the established laws, (for there is no country, however uncivilized, where there does not exist certain rules of action, prescribed by superior authority, which the Community are bound to submit to) many are, no doubt, the victims of hostility; many by the voluntary sale of freedom, and many bred up to the condition. I will not affront your judgment, Sir, nor that of the Public, with repeating the absurd farce of Kidnapping, or of dogs trained to the pursuit of Human Game, such accounts being too glaringly absurd, even for the acceptance of credulity.

Admitting the right of Slavery, arising from criminal conviction, and that the sentence of the law, authorizes the sale of such Convicts as may fall under its condemnation: the right of purchase cannot, I believe, be denied, upon any principles of justice, equity, or reason. Where there is an absolute right in the first, there must necessarily be an absolute right in the latter; and where the one is refused, the other becomes nugatory: Thus, therefore, with respect to this great source of Slavery, the original condition and the transfer, appear justifiable.

It will, no doubt, be objected, that the laws under which some of those unhappy Convicts are thus sentenced, are merciless, some inadequate, and, that, in some cases, the offences are altogether impossible: These, I confess, are speculations natural enough in a country, where, notwithstanding the wisdom of the Legislature, the written Registers of Jurisprudence are replete with similar instances. But, surely, while we remain indifferent as to domestic reformation, we need not be altogether so scrupulous in respect to foreign defects; surely, we may with a greater degree of justice and humanity, purchase the labour of a Slave sentenced to that condition for offences, be they never so trifling, than consent (as in some cases) to punish with beggary and disgrace, the unoffending offspring of Parents, convicted of crimes, be those crimes never so atrocious. If any offence could possibly support the legal confiscation of ancestorial possession, and create a corruption of blood in the innocent Heirs of guilty Criminals, that of High Treason would certainly be the most deserving; but the law, both morally and religiously viewed, is utterly inconsistant with equity and justice. We are told, that in Africa, Adultery is punished with Slavery: we are indeed, much more merciful: We are also told, that Witchcraft is punishable in the same manner, but in respect to this offence, we are infinitely more severe. The laws with us against that crime, inflict the most horrible of deaths; and although from their absurd and shocking tendency, they are become obsolete, they are still suffered to disgrace our Parliamentary Registers.

As to the other causes of original Slavery, they certainly will not bear the least justification: But, until the ignorant gross

African be made sensible of this injustice, (which appears from numberless insurmountable difficulties to be impossible) there cannot be a greater alleviation of the calamities arising therefrom, than the OPPORTUNITIES of EMENDATION afforded by the Slave Trade of Europe: It is the *certain* means of affecting, at least, in part, those Philanthropic Improvements, which the visionary suggestions of Colonization and social intercourse can never lead to; and, it is the only adoption, by which we can preserve our West India Possessions, valuable and important as they are, to the Trade, Commerce, and prosperity of the Empire.

F I N I S.